

Why has the media been silent that one of the arrested Russian spies is one of their own?

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Among the 11 alleged Russian spies arrested recently by the FBI was journalist Vicky Palaez, known primarily to Hispanics in the New York area for 20 years of well-read and virulently anti-American columns in *El Diario/La Prensa*, the largest circulation Spanish language paper in the U.S.

She's a favorite of Fidel Castro. In one of his weekly commentaries published in the Cuban press not so long ago, he quoted one of her columns.

But why has the news media ignored the charges that Palaez is a Russian agent – planted promote amnesty for the millions of illegal aliens in America?

To quote Al Gore, to reveal that one of their own is a foreign agent is “an inconvenient truth.”

Incidentally, should you think that espionage stopped with the end of the Cold War, think again, says former CIA agent Kent Clizbe.

Russia has never quit targeting America, he says. “They infiltrated American society and planted the seeds of political correctness nearly 100 years ago. Manipulation and deception are as Russian as babushkas and vodka. The FBI's arrests are not surprising. Neither is it surprising that their objective was more about ‘gaining influence’ in political circles rather than sole intelligence gathering.”

Russian political leader Vladimir Putin, notes Clizbe in an article for the Internet magazine *FrontPage*, “is a KGB operations officer – and always will be.”

Palaez was instrumental in leading the media attacks against Arizona's new law authorizing local officials to enforce existing federal laws.

“The huge marches of this May Day condemning the pernicious anti-immigration law passed in Arizona, have shaken all of the United States,” she wrote. The Arizona statute, “resembles laws passed in Nazi Germany or South Africa in the apartheid period.”

Castro quoted that column in his weekly editorial carried in the government-run Cuban media. Since Castro is in such poor health, there is serious doubt that he actually writes the columns.

“Hers is such a well-argued document,” reads his May 8 editorial, “that I do not wish to conclude this reflection without including it.”

Palaez's article that Castro quotes goes on to accuse Arizona Governor Jan Brewer of “hate against people with an accent,” of “promoting ethnic cleansing,” and of authorizing Arizona's police to fire upon people based on the color of their skin.

Pelaez was arrested with 10 others, including her husband, accused of spying for the Russian Federation. The FBI affidavit stated that she traveled to an unnamed South American country to pick up cash for fellow agents in Yonkers sent by Russian handlers and to pass on messages.

In January 2000, she was videotaped meeting with a Russian government official at a public park in Peru. There she received a bag from the official, according to one of the FBI complaints.

She and her husband, Juan Lazaro, discussed plans to pass covert messages with invisible ink to Russian officials during another trip to South America, the court documents also claim.

According to the FBI, in one 2002 trip, Pelaez returned with \$80,000 stuffed into her luggage – eight bags each containing \$10,000.

Her son, Waldo Mariscal, told the court that his mother was innocent.

“This is a farce,” he said. “We don’t know the other people.”

The FBI said it intercepted a message from Moscow to some of the defendants describing their main mission as “to search and develop ties in policy-making circles in U.S.”

That describes Palaez well.

“Vicky Pelaez has been a faithful scribe for the Castro regime’s propaganda ministry for years,” writes Humberto Fontova. “Her work appears just to the left of Fidel and Raul’s own articles.”

In a 2006 column she wrote, “Fidel Castro is already immortal!” she wrote, “He is a man who inspired and demonstrated the fertile path of truth for other leaders!”

She went on to compare him to Jesus: “We had the moments of Christ, Mohammed, Confucius, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Newton, Pascal, Bolivar, Marti, Che Guevara, etc. They all left the scene, yet unlike us mere mortals, they remain immortal. They were rebels like the very angels of God who did not resign themselves to a sad destiny of mere mortals but instead valiantly challenged the very heavens to steal its glory!”

“Fidel Castro,” she continued, “belongs to that glorious group of rebels! With his towering intelligence, discipline, drive, and persistence he launched his heroic struggle and gained his people’s support to fight for new and sovereign Cuba! But his fight is not over!”

How interesting to learn that she was on Putin’s payroll.

It reminds us of the profound warnings issued from KGB defector Yuri Bezmenov back in 1984. He warned America against “cynical, ego-centric people, people who can look into your eyes with angelic expression and tell you a lie.”

Those are the kind of American traitors sought out by the KGB, he warned: “These are always the most recruitable – people who lack moral principles, who are either too greedy or who suffer from too much self-importance.”

That description would seem to capture Pelaez perfectly, notes Fontova. Shortly after her arrest, her former colleague at *El Diario/La Prensa*, Miguel Angel Sanchez, appeared on the New York City area’s Spanish-language TV show *A Mano Limpia*.

He distanced the newspaper from the alleged Russian agent, recalling that she had been suspended from the paper for plagiarism. He also mentioned how her husband, Juan Lazaro, a Baruch College professor arrested with her, served as the official New York treasurer for the Peruvian Communist terrorist group Shining Path.

Another alleged agent arrested by the FBI, according to the *London Daily Mail* newspaper, was Anna Chapman, a red-haired “femme fatale,” a 28-year-old New York City divorcee with a masters’ degree in economics and her own online real-estate business.

She was held without bail after prosecutors called her a “highly trained agent” and a “practiced deceiver.”

But how can this be? After all, aren’t America and Russia friends now?

According to FBI agents, Russia’s covert foreign intelligence operations against America have reached Cold War levels since Vladimir Putin rose to power. His SVR, the latest

incarnation of the KGB's intelligence arm, has an extensive network of undercover agents throughout America.

According to Clizbe, the Russians recognized an incredible opportunity with Obama's rise to the White House – and have taken advantage of it on a grand scale.

“After 2008, smelling weakness and sensing operational openings, the oligarchy flexed its muscles, testing Obama,” observes Clizbe. “Obama babbled about ‘re-setting’ the relationship. Putin and his minions reinvigorated covert operations. While they smiled at their ‘new best friends,’ a stable of covert reporters infiltrated.

“They are very tenacious, focused, and professional,” he writes. “They never take their eye off the ball. Even when the Politburo was purging KGB officers – calling them home and putting a bullet in their neck – they still operated successfully.”

With Obama's election, “Russia saw the strategic opening,” says Clizbe. “Regaining her former glory as a super-power was in reach. Surely a message went out to all SVR stations: ‘Our historic covert influence has borne fruit. Obama and his clique are our anti-American agents of change. Reach out. Intimidate. Influence. Negotiate. Accelerate developmentals. Lend a sympathetic ear. Help them destroy their own country.’”

After all, notes Clizbe, “Obama was nurtured in the fertile center of Soviet covert influence: Columbia University. The KGB file on Columbia dates back to Werner Rakov, a Soviet trade representative, who enrolled in Columbia in 1925. Paul Massing, a ‘social researcher’ spied for the KGB, and helped his wife, Heidi, recruit.

“Whittaker Chambers studied at Columbia before joining the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA),” writes Clizbe. “Elizabeth Bentley did too. Bill Ayers earned his education degree at Columbia Teachers College. Cy Oggins, a hapless American agent for the KGB, shot dead in the basement of the KGB headquarters, studied at Columbia in 1920s.

“One of the Soviet's supreme covert influence agents, Dr. George S. Counts, joined the International Institute at Columbia Teachers College in 1927. With no background, he was hired to specialize in Russia. Immediately sent to Moscow, and provided with a highly intelligent Russian assistant, he was recruited by the KGB within a year. His powerful covert influence operations, guided by the Soviets, planted the seeds of anti-American political correctness that destroyed our education system.

“And young Barry Obama earned a degree there.”

According to the complaint, filed by Maria Ricci, a special agent with the counterintelligence arm of the FBI, the spies:

- buried information in the ground which could later be picked up by other agents;
- hoarded up to 50,000 British pounds sterling in cash in their homes;
- met an employee of the U.S. government with regards to nuclear weapons research and other high-ranking officials;
- received money from an official associated with the Manhattan-based Permanent Mission to the United States;
- took the identities of dead Americans to help them carry out their mission;
- tried to get jobs in firms which gave them access to those who knew state secrets;
- used advanced steganography software to send encrypted messages to each other by hiding them on publicly available websites;
- used and perfected the “brush pass,” a clandestine way of handing over items as one person passes another, which is known as a “flash meeting”;
- used false documents to travel into and out of the United States;

- used short-wave radios and codes to send messages to each other;
- used wireless Internet in cafes and bookshops to covertly communicate with Russian agents parked in a van close by; and
- wrote messages in invisible ink that they sent to Russian agents in South America.

The agents are also said to have been schooled in Morse code and how to cover their tracks so they left no evidence.

Targets include research projects and military equipment under development.

Chapman is believed to have used her high-profile connections to pass American secrets on to a Russian government official every Wednesday, says *Daily Mail* reporter Daniel Bates.

She and her ten alleged co-conspirators used invisible ink, short-wave radios, steganography and wireless Internet in cafés to send coded messages back to Russia – including information on nuclear weapons.

Steganography is the art of covert communication to hide a message from a third party. It differs from cryptography, the art of writing in code, designed make a message unreadable by a third party. Modern steganography uses technology, such as hiding a nuclear bomb's blueprints in a photo of a baby.

Eight of the suspects were married couples – at least one with a child

Some of them are believed to have been operating for more than a decade, Bates says.

The arrests began when an undercover FBI agent posing as a Russian agent met with Chapman at a restaurant in New York. The agent was pretending to send the alleged spy on a mission to deliver a fake passport to another female agent, according to court documents.

She was told that her fellow spy would greet her by asking: “Haven't we met in California last summer?”

Chapman was supposed to reply: “No, I think it was in the Hamptons.”

Once she had handed over the passport, she was to plant a stamp on a wall map to let her handlers know she had succeeded, according to Bates.

The FBI watched her as she sat in a coffee shop in New York and used her laptop computer to, they say, communicate with a Russian agent hiding in a mini-van nearby.

“They also observed her as she went into a Verizon mobile phone shop in Brooklyn to buy a phone using the name 'Irine Kutsov' – giving her address as '99 Fake Street,’” reports Bates.

She intended to use the phone for her spying activities, the FBI says.

She and the other alleged spies have been charged with money laundering and acting as unregistered agents of a foreign government.

Ten were arrested in the U.S. and charged in American courts. An 11th man went on the run – but was arrested by police in Cyprus.

Among the accused were four couples living quietly in the suburbs of New York and Washington and Boston. They are believed to have married as part of their cover. At least one of the couples has a child together.

Court papers also describe a high-tech spy-to-spy communications system used by the defendants – short-range wireless communications between laptop computers.

However, Clizbe says the arrests are only the tip of the iceberg.

For almost a century, he writes, they and their predecessors have been dedicated to subverting the United States.

“They targeted the three main cultural transmitters: education/academia, the media, and Hollywood. The anti-American messages (America is a racist, foreigner-hating, sexist imperialistic, hating culture), implanted like advertising, went viral. A KGB officer did not need

to be at every meeting of radicals. The KGB chose its influence agents carefully. The message exploded across American society.

“The KGB influence agent at Columbia, Dr. Counts, created the anti-American point of view in education and academia. In his 1932 speeches ‘Dare the School Build a New Social Order,’ declared to American teachers that they needed to ‘change society.’ Counts told American teachers that they had a duty to bring about a new age of collectivism. Counts told teachers that the ‘age of individualism is dead.’

“The Russian spies today are only the tail end of Russia’s fixation on us.”

Clizbe notes that arrests of Russian spies after the collapse of the Soviet Union are not a new phenomenon. The two most prominent cases involving Russian intelligence in the past decade may have been those of Robert Hanssen, the FBI counter-intelligence agent who was convicted of passing along secrets to the agency, and Sergei Tretyakov, deputy head of intelligence at Russia's U.N. mission in 1995-2000.

Tretyakov, who defected in 2000, claimed in a 2008 book that his agents helped the Russian government steal nearly \$500 million from the U.N.'s oil-for-food program in Iraq before the fall of Saddam Hussein.

That book was ignored by America’s mainstream press.

Tretyakov said he oversaw an operation that helped Saddam's regime manipulate the price of Iraqi oil sold under the program and allowed Russia to skim profits.

The Russians have not relaxed their efforts to destroy America, says one of the Cold War's most famous defectors, Oleg Gordievsky, 71, an ex-deputy head of the KGB in London,

He says Russia still has as many as 50 deep-cover couples spying inside the United States.

After the arrest of the 11, the FBI says that alleged conspirators Richard and Cynthia Murphy, who lived in New Jersey, were asked to gather information about Obama's impending trip to Russia that summer.

They were also asked for the U.S. negotiating position on the START nuclear arms reduction treaty as well as Afghanistan and the approach Washington would take in dealing with Iran's nuclear program.

They were also asked to send background on U.S. officials travelling with Obama or involved in foreign policy.

Among their instructions were: “Try to outline their views and most important Obama goals, which he expects to achieve during summit in July and how does his team plan to do it, arguments, provisions, means of persuasion to “lure” Russia into cooperation in U.S. interests.”

Moscow also wanted reports “which should reflect approaches and ideas of U.S. foreign policy officials.

One intercepted message said Cynthia Murphy, “had several work-related personal meetings with” a man the court papers describe as a prominent New York-based financier active in politics. Her instructions described the man as a very interesting target and urged the defendants to “try to build up, little by little, relations.”

One defendant in Massachusetts made contact in 2004 with an unidentified man who worked at a U.S. government research facility.

“He works on issues of strategic planning related to nuclear weapon development,” the intelligence report said. The now-arrested Russian agent “had conversations with him about research programs on small yield high penetration nuclear warheads recently authorized by U.S. Congress (nuclear “bunker-buster” warheads),” according to the report.

One message back to Moscow from the defendants focused on turnover at the top level of the CIA.

Did Obama err in making so public the FBI arrests? Journalist Philip Shenon writes that U.S. counterintelligence officers are worried that the arrest may have weakened America's ability to track Russian espionage efforts.

"The Obama administration's decision to roll up a network of low-ranking, sometimes bumbling Russian spies has left other western governments perplexed – and in a bind," writes Shenon.

A senior European diplomat based in Washington told Shenon that MI-5, the British equivalent of the FBI, fears the American arrests will serve to tip off Russian agents "who have lived among us in Europe for years and years – without much benefit to Mother Russia but some benefit to us since we know who they are."

The worry, he and other diplomats told Shenon, is that Russian espionage networks already under surveillance will attempt to go further underground – or disband – before their intentions are clear.

Memories are especially long in Britain on the issue. British intelligence officials are still furious with their American counterparts for revealing details of an Al Qaeda plot to bomb jumbo jets leaving London's Heathrow airport headed for the U.S.

British officials said that an attack was not at all imminent, and that further police surveillance could have led investigators to senior terrorist leaders.

The European diplomat in Washington, speaking on condition of anonymity, said his government was perplexed about the timing of the arrest of the alleged Russian agents in the U.S.

"Even if one or two of these so-called spies is about to leave the U.S., you have to wonder whether the arrests were worth the price," he said. "It's all faintly ridiculous."

American officials have said the FBI moved against the 11 alleged spies because one of them – known to his neighbors in suburban Montclair, N.J., by the name Richard Murphy – had plans to leave the United States within several days and might not return.

FBI officials said they were also concerned by the recent, suspicious overseas travel of another of the targets, a man known as Christopher R. Metsos, who was arrested in Cyprus.

Whatever the reasons for the timing, the Justice Department and the FBI have been unable to point to a single significant piece of classified information that the so-called spies obtained during their many years in the United States.

In fact, court papers filed by the Justice Department suggest that the Russian agents were tasked to gather information about the United States that might be readily obtained on the internet or through the routine work of paid lobbyists on Capitol Hill.

"People back in Moscow could have sat down at a computer and used Google to get the same information," said Robert Legvold, a Russia specialist at Columbia University's Harriman Institute.

"It's peanuts," he said of the significance of the spying operation, at least as it is described in court papers.

He said he was not surprised that other western governments might be alarmed and annoyed by the U.S. arrests, if only because it might force them to consider rounding up known – if not particularly threatening – Russian espionage rings operating on their own soil. "We're not the only ones who have been a target of this," he said.

Nina Khrushcheva, granddaughter of former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and now a professor of international affairs at a Moscow college called “the New School,” says the U.S. needs to brace for a backlash.

She said the arrests in the U.S. could prompt Russian intelligence agencies to retaliate quickly by launching a roundup of suspected American intelligence agents within Russian borders.

“I’m afraid the Russians will go bonkers over this out and will try to find American spies here,” she said.