

HIGH GDR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL DEFECTS TO FRG

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[Text] Munich--A high-ranking GDR diplomat has defected to the Federal Republic. A spokesman for the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) at Pullach near Munich confirmed today that the man is in the Federal Republic. He made no further statement about his identity, post or duties.

According to BILD ZEITUNG (Friday edition), the man is one of the highest ranking GDR diplomats. In the report, which has been prereleased to DPA, his name is given as Peter Steglich, head of the "northern Europe" department of the GDR Foreign Ministry. (as received) According to BILD ZEITUNG, he had worked for at least the last 3 years for the BND. He is described as the highest ranking German spy in the GDR.

According to the paper, Steglich had flown with an East Berlin economic delegation to Helsinki in the last week of April. When he was scheduled to meet his hosts, he said: "I don't feel well. I must see a doctor immediately."

Instead, he drove to the embassy of the Federal Republic and asked for a Federal German passport. The defector had then flown on the next plane to the Federal Republic where, according to the paper, he is now being questioned by the Federal Intelligence Service.

According to the directory "The GDR Diplomatic Service" (1977), Steglich, who was born on 24 February 1936, had worked in the Foreign Ministry since 1961. From 1968 to 1971 he was an adviser to the GDR trade mission in Finland, and from May 1971 to 1972 he was the head of the GDR chamber of foreign trade mission in Sweden. In February 1973 he was appointed GDR ambassador in Stockholm, a post he held until May 1974. Since October 1974 Steglich had been the head of the Fourth European Department (northern Europe) in the GDR Foreign Ministry.

According to the directory, the SED member received the Medal of Outstanding Service in 1965 and 1967, and the GDR Medal of Merit in 1970. In 1972 he was decorated as a Meritorious Activist.