**Two real terrific spy (defector) stories young people never heard of, and most seniors have totally forgotten.**

**Both were sensational defectors with access to nuclear secrets.**

***One was a Russian General, and other one is a Chinese official.***

***Do you know who they are?***

**The first was Oleg Penkovsky!**

**** **General Oleg Penkovsky**

General Oleg Penkovsky was the most famous, then Soviet, defector/spy, who provided technical reports on the weaknesses of Soviet ICBMs that helped John F. Kennedy deal effectively with Nikita Krushchev and averted a nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Early in his military career, Penkovsky was an Army combat soldier until he was wounded, and after recovering from his wounds he began his career in the Soviet Army Intelligence Directorate, known as the GRU. Excelling in the GRU, he was promoted to Colonel and was assigned as the Deputy Chief of the Foreign Section of the State Committee for the Coordination of Scientific Research. This department received all scientific and technical intelligence collected on the U.S., Britain and other Western countries. He lost confidence in the leadership of Nikita Krushchev and was so upset that he decided to defect to America.

Penkovsky initially approached American students on the [Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshoy_Moskvoretsky_Bridge" \o "Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge) in Moscow in July 1960 and gave them a package in which he offered to spy for the U.S. He asked the students to deliver his information package to an intelligence officer at the U.S. Embassy. The [Central Intelligence Agency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency) could not contact him, because U.S. Embassy staff feared an international incident, and the CIA had to contact the British [MI6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secret_Intelligence_Service) for assistance.

The first meeting between Penkovsky and two American and two British intelligence officers occurred during a visit by Penkovsky to London in April 1961. For the following 18 months, Penkovsky supplied a tremendous amount of information to the CIA–MI6 team of handlers, including documents demonstrating that the Soviet nuclear arsenal was much smaller than [Nikita Khrushchev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev) claimed or the CIA had thought and that the Soviets were not yet capable of producing a large number of ICBMs. This information was invaluable to President [John F. Kennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) in negotiating with Nikita Khrushchev for the removal of the Soviet IRBMs from Cuba**.**

In 1961 Penkovsky worked with MI6 and pass extremely valuable intelligence to the Brits. What did he pass to the West? He provided more than 5,000 photographs of classified military, political, and economic documents to Brits which was shared with us.

Of exception value were documents revealing capabilities of Soviet ICBMs. His intelligence revealed that their Soviet long range missiles were, in fact, quite weak. This intelligence was vital during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Fortunately he had delivered this critical data before he was exposed, arrested, sentenced and executed. Penkovsky was one of the most likely **the most** important intelligence source during the Cold War.

High level defectors like Penkovsky are quite unusual and rare. And next ...

Have we ever had a high level Chinese defector?

There is just one who is known to the public. He was **Mr. Ling Wancheng**. Ling defected in 2012. Ok youngsters, wh0 remembers Ling Wancheng?

**Who is Ling Wancheng? No photos of Ling Wancheng are available. Ling is discretely living likely in a rural area in America away from populated locations.**

**Ling Wancheng is the brother of Mr. Ling Jihua** who was the Chinese Communist Party’s Party Secretary, and thus Ling was also the Chief of Staff to then President Hu Jin-Tao.

 **Ling Jihua, brother of Ling Wancheng.**

He had complete access to, and was responsible for, the safeguarding of the most important, and most sensitive, internal documents in China. This position is similar to that of Chief of Staff to our President, except that Ling had both access to, and control of, documentation of national level discussions and decisions on every topic of interest to the President. If 2,700 documents were brought into, and passed to the U.S. in the US, it could not have been hardcopy, but in digital media, either several high volume memory sticks/cards, or an external hard drive.

Ling Jihua’s fall from grace began in February 2012 when his son crashed his $100K+ Ferrari at high speed in Beijing, killing him and also one of two young ladies who were in the vehicle and involved in sexual high jinks.

When former President Hu Jintao heard of Lin Wancheng's defection and the documents he provided to America, he reportedly had a heart attack. Hu survived so that shock did not kill him.

Ling Wancheng traveled for several years as a businessman and not a government official to America. Thus his luggage was not subject to tight inspection and search whenever he entered or exited the US. He had entered, and exited the US multiple times, and owned a mansion in Loomis, CA. Ling was had money, and owned a $2.5 million, 8,000 square foot mansion in Loomis, CA. He enjoyed life in America and had become an addicted golfer who owned two golf courses.

No intelligence operations can match the invaluable golden bucket of intelligence provided by a national level, walk-in source, like Ling, or it can be really valuable when they defect and report on station for years like General Oleg Penkofsky.

We had a very high level source on Vladimir Puton's staff, but after reporting for years, but because there was concerned that he had been compromised, the defector was extracted to America in 2019. Perhaps someday we will get the details. The defector most likely is living in a rural area away from any metropolis.

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**SOURCES:**

[***https://www.britannica.com/biography/Oleg-Vladimirovich-Penkovsky***](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Oleg-Vladimirovich-Penkovsky)

**Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky**, (born April 23, 1919, Vladikavkaz, Russia—died May 1963?, U.S.S.R.), senior Soviet military intelligence officer who was convicted of spying for the United Kingdom and the United States. He was probably the West’s most valuable double agent during the Cold War.

Penkovsky joined the Soviet Red Army in 1937 and served as an artillery officer in World War II, being severely wounded in 1944. He attended the prestigious Frunze Military Academy in 1945–48. In 1949 Penkovsky transferred from the regular army to the Soviet army intelligence directorate (GRU). After attending the Military Diplomatic Academy (1949–53), he became an intelligence officer, serving primarily in Moscow. By 1960 he had become a colonel in the GRU and deputy chief of the foreign section of the State Committee for the Coordination of Scientific Research (1960–62), in which post his task was to collect scientific and technical intelligence on the United States, Britain, and other Western countries.

Penkovsky had in the meantime become increasingly disillusioned with the Soviet system, particularly with the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev. In April 1961, through Greville M. Wynne, a British businessman, he offered his services to British intelligence. Between April 1961 and August 1962 Penkovsky passed more than 5,000 photographs of classified military, political, and economic documents to British and U.S. intelligence forces. The information he provided on the Soviets’ relatively weak capability in long-range missiles proved invaluable to the United States before and during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. Penkovsky was in fact arrested by the Soviets on Oct. 22, 1962, at the height of that crisis, after they realized that highly classified information was leaking to the West.

Penkovsky was put on trial for treason in May 1963 and was found guilty and sentenced to death. According to an official Soviet announcement, he was executed on May 16, 1963, though other reports have him committing suicide while in a Soviet camp. In 1965 his journal, The Penkovskiy Papers, was published in the United States, though the book’s authenticity has been questioned by some.

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**Oleg Penkovsky**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[J](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#mw-head)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Oleg Penkovsky** Олег Владимирович Пеньковский | |
| [Oleg Penkovsky CIA.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Oleg_Penkovsky_CIA.png) | |
| **Born** | 23 April 1919  [Vladikavkaz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladikavkaz), North Ossetia, Soviet Russia |
| **Died** | 16 May 1963 (aged 44)  Moscow, Soviet Union |
| **Alma mater** | [Frunze Military Academy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frunze_Military_Academy) |
| **Criminal charge** | Treason |
| **Criminal penalty** | Execution |
| **Espionage activity** | |
| **Allegiance** | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a9/Flag_of_the_Soviet_Union.svg/23px-Flag_of_the_Soviet_Union.svg.png [Soviet Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union) |
| **Service branch** | [GRU](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GRU_(Soviet_Union)) [MI6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MI6) & [CIA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CIA) |
| **Service years** | 1953-1963 |
| **Rank** | Colonel |

**Oleg Vladimirovich Penkovsky** (Russian: Олег Владимирович Пеньковский; 23 April 1919 – 16 May 1963), [codenamed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_name) HERO,[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-1) was a Soviet [military intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_intelligence) ([GRU](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GRU_(Soviet_Union))) colonel during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Penkovsky informed the United States and the United Kingdom about Soviet military secrets, most importantly, the appearance and footprint of Soviet [intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intermediate-range_ballistic_missile_(IRBM)) installations and the weakness of the Soviet [intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intercontinental_ballistic_missile_(ICBM)) program. This information was decisive in allowing the US to recognize that the Soviets were placing IRBMs in Cuba before most of the missiles were operational. It also gave US President John F. Kennedy, during the [Cuban Missile Crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis) that followed, valuable information about Soviet weakness that allowed him to face down Soviet leader [Nikita Khrushchev](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev) and resolve the crisis without a nuclear war.

Penkovsky was the highest-ranking Soviet official to provide intelligence for the West up until that time, and is one of several individuals credited with altering the course of the [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War). He was arrested by the Soviets in October 1962, then tried and executed the following year.



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Early life and military career

Penkovsky never knew his father, who was killed fighting as an officer in the [White Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Army) in the [Russian Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Civil_War) when he was a baby. Brought up in the North Caucasus, Penkovsky graduated from the Kiev Artillery Academy with the rank of [lieutenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant) in 1939. After taking part in the [Winter War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_War) against Finland and in [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II), he reached the rank of [lieutenant-colonel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieutenant-colonel). In 1944, he was assigned to the headquarters of Colonel-General Sergei Varentsov, commander of artillery on the 1st Ukrainian front, who became his patron. Penkovsky was wounded in action in 1944, at about the same time as Varentsov, who appointed him his Liaison Officer. In 1945, Penkovsky married the teenage daughter of Lieutenant-General Dmitri Gapanovich, thus acquiring another high-ranking patron.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-2) On Varentsov's recommendation, he studied at the [Frunze Military Academy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frunze_Military_Academy) in 1945-48, then worked as a staff officer.

Penkovsky joined the [GRU](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GRU_(Soviet_Union)) as an officer, in 1953. In 1955 Penkovsky was appointed [military attaché](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_attach%C3%A9) in [Ankara](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankara), Turkey, but was recalled after he had reported his superior officer, and later other GRU personnel for a breach of regulations, which made him unpopular in the department. Relying once again on Varentsov's patronage, he spent nine months studying rocket artillery at [Dzerzhinsky Military Academy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dzerzhinsky_Military_Academy). He was selected for the post of military attache in India, but the [KGB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KGB) had uncovered the story of his father's death, and he was suspended, investigated, and assigned in November 1960 to the State Committee for Science and Technology. He later worked at the Soviet Committee for Scientific Research.

Overtures to CIA and MI6[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oleg_Penkovsky&action=edit&section=2)]

**Penkovsky approached American students on the [Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolshoy_Moskvoretsky_Bridge" \o "Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge) in Moscow in July 1960 and gave them a package in which he offered to spy for the U.S. He asked them to deliver it to an intelligence officer at the U.S. Embassy. The**[**Central Intelligence Agency**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency)**delayed in contacting him.**[**[3]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-3)**When the U.S. Embassy in Moscow refused to cooperate, fearing an international incident, the CIA contacted**[**MI6**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secret_Intelligence_Service)**for assistance.**[**[4]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-4)

A British salesman of industrial equipment to countries behind the [Iron Curtain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_Curtain), [Greville Wynne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greville_Wynne" \o "Greville Wynne), was recruited by MI6 to communicate with Penkovksy. In his autobiography, Wynne says that he was carefully developed by British intelligence over many years with the specific task of making contact with Penkovsky.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-5)

The **first meeting between Penkovsky and two American and two British intelligence officers occurred during a visit by Penkovsky to London in April 1961**. For the **following 18 months, Penkovsky supplied a tremendous amount of information to the CIA–MI6 team of handlers, including documents demonstrating that the Soviet nuclear arsenal was much smaller than**[**Nikita Khrushchev**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev)**claimed or the CIA had thought and that the Soviets were not yet capable of producing a large number of ICBMs**.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-6) **This information was invaluable to President**[**John F. Kennedy**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_F._Kennedy)**in negotiating with Nikita Khrushchev for the removal of the Soviet IRBMs from Cuba.**

[Peter Wright](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Wright_(MI5_officer)), a former British [MI5](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MI5) officer known for his scathing condemnation of the leadership of British intelligence during most of the Cold War, believed that Penkovsky was a [fake defection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fake_defection). Wright noted that, unlike [Igor Gouzenko](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igor_Gouzenko) and other earlier defectors, Penkovsky did not reveal the names of any Soviet agents in the West but only provided organisational detail, much of which was known already. Some of the documents provided were originals, which Wright thought could not have been easily taken from their sources. Wright was bitter towards British intelligence, reportedly believing that it should have adopted his proposed methods to identify British/Soviet agents. In Wright's view, the failure of British intelligence leaders to listen to him caused them to become paralysed when British/Soviet agents defected to the Soviet Union; in his book, *[Spycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spycatcher" \o "Spycatcher)*, he suggests that his hypothesis had to be true, and that the Soviets were aware of this paralysis and planted Penkovsky.

In his memoir *Spycatcher: The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer* (1987), written with journalist [Paul Greengrass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Greengrass), Wright says:

When I first wrote my Penkovsky analysis [Maurice Oldfield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Oldfield) (later Chief of MI6 in the 1970s), who played a key role in the Penkovsky case as Chief of Station in Washington, told me: 'You've got a long row to hoe with this one, Peter, there's a lot of K's [knighthoods] and Gongs [medals] riding high on the back of Penkovsky' he said, referring to the honours heaped on those involved in the Penkovsky operation.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-7)

Former [KGB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/KGB) major-general [Oleg Kalugin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Kalugin) does not mention Penkovsky in his comprehensive memoir about his career in intelligence against the West.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-8) The KGB defector Vladimir N. Sakharov suggests Penkovsky was genuine, saying: "I knew about the ongoing KGB reorganisation precipitated by Oleg Penkovsky's case and [Yuri Nosenko](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuri_Nosenko)'s defection. The party was not satisfied with KGB performance ... I knew many heads in the KGB had rolled again, as they had after Stalin".[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-9) While the weight of opinion seems to be that Penkovsky was genuine, the debate underscores the difficulty faced by all intelligence agencies of determining information offered from the enemy. **In a meeting with Secretary of Defense**[**Leon Panetta**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Panetta)**, the head of Russia's foreign intelligence service,**[**Mikhail Fradkov**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Fradkov)**named Penkovsky as Russia's biggest intelligence failure.**[**[10]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-schwirtz-10)

Cuban Missile Crisis[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oleg_Penkovsky&action=edit&section=3)]

*See also:*[*Cuban Missile Crisis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis)

The Soviet leadership began the deployment of nuclear missiles, in the belief that Washington would not detect the Cuban missile sites until it was too late to do anything about them. **Penkovsky provided plans and descriptions of the nuclear rocket launch sites in Cuba to the West. This information allowed the West to identify the missile sites from the low-resolution pictures provided by US**[**U-2**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockheed_U-2)**spy planes. The documents provided by Penkovsky showed that the Soviet Union was not prepared for war in the area, which emboldened Kennedy to risk the operation in Cuba.**[**[11]**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-rothstein-11) Former GRU captain [Viktor Suvorov](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viktor_Suvorov), who defected to the UK in 1978, later wrote in his book on Soviet intelligence, "historians will remember with gratitude the name of the GRU Colonel Oleg Penkovsky. Thanks to his priceless information the Cuban crisis was not transformed into a last World War".[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-12)

Penkovsky's activities were revealed by [Jack Dunlap](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Dunlap), a [National Security Agency](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Agency) (NSA) employee and Soviet spy working for the KGB. Top KGB officers had known for more than a year that Penkovsky was a British agent, but they protected their source, a highly placed mole in [MI6](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MI6). Jack Dunlap was just another source they had to protect. They worked hard, shadowing British diplomats, to build up a "discovery case" against Penkovsky so that they could arrest him without throwing suspicion on their moles. Their caution in this matter may have led to the missiles being discovered earlier than the Soviets would have preferred. After a West German agent overheard a remark at [Stasi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stasi) headquarters, paraphrased as "I wonder how things are going in Cuba" he passed it on to the CIA.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-13)

**Penkovsky was arrested on 22 October 1962**. This was prior to President Kennedy's address to the US revealing that U-2 spy plane photographs had confirmed intelligence reports that the Soviets were installing medium-range nuclear missiles in Cuba, in what was known as [Operation Anadyr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Anadyr). President Kennedy was deprived of information from a potentially important intelligence agent, such as reporting that Nikita Khrushchev was already looking for ways to defuse the situation, which might have lessened the tension during the ensuing 13-day stand-off.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-14) That information might have reduced the pressure on Kennedy to launch an invasion of the island, which could have risked Soviet use of [*9K52 Luna-M*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9K52_Luna-M)-class [tactical nuclear weapons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tactical_nuclear_weapon) against U.S. troops.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-15)

Arrest and death[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oleg_Penkovsky&action=edit&section=4)]

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Oleg_Penkovsky_1963.jpg)

**Penkovsky at the trial in 1963**

Penkovsky's American contacts received a letter from Penkovsky notifying them that a Moscow [dead drop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_drop) had been loaded. Upon servicing the dead drop, the American handler was arrested, signaling that Penkovsky had been apprehended by Soviet authorities. Penkovsky was executed but there are conflicting reports about the manner of his death. Alexander Zagvozdin, Chief KGB interrogator for the investigation, stated that Penkovsky had been "questioned perhaps a hundred times" and that he had been shot and cremated.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-16) The noted Soviet sculptor [Ernst Neizvestny](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Neizvestny) said that he had been told by the director of the [Donskoye Cemetery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donskoye_Cemetery" \o "Donskoye Cemetery) crematorium "how Penkovsky [had been] executed by 'fire'".[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-17) A similar description was later included in Ernest Volkman's popular history book about spies, [Tom Clancy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Clancy)'s novel [*Red Rabbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Rabbit) and in Viktor Suvorov's book *Aquarium*.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-18) In a 2010 interview, Suvorov denied that the man in the film[[*clarification needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Please_clarify)] was Penkovsky and said that he had been shot.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-19) [Greville Wynne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greville_Wynne" \o "Greville Wynne), in his book *The Man from Odessa,* claimed that Penkovsky killed himself. Wynne had worked as both Penkovsky's contact and courier; both men were arrested by the Soviets in October 1962.

Repercussions[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oleg_Penkovsky&action=edit&section=5)]

The Soviet public was first told of Penkovsky's arrest more than seven weeks later, when *Pravda* named Wynne and Jacobs as his contacts, without naming anyone else. In May 1963, after his trial, *Izvestya* reported that Varentsov, who had since achieved the rank of Chief [Marshal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshal_of_the_Soviet_Union) of Artillery and Commander in Chief of Rocket Forces and candidate member of the [Central Committee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Committee_of_the_Communist_Party_of_the_Soviet_Union) had been demoted to the rank of Major General. In June he was expelled from the Central Committee for 'having relaxed his political vigilance.' Three other officers were also disciplined.[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-20) The head of the GRU, [Ivan Serov](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Serov) was sacked during the same period. He was reputedly on friendly terms with Penkovsky,[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-21) which is very likely to have been a cause of his fall.

Portrayal in popular culture[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oleg_Penkovsky&action=edit&section=6)]

Penkovsky was portrayed by Christopher Rozycki in the 1985 [BBC Television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC_Television) serial *Wynne and Penkovsky*. His spying career was the subject of episode 1 of the 2007 BBC Television docudrama [*Nuclear Secrets*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_Secrets), titled "The Spy from Moscow" in which he was portrayed by [Mark Bonnar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Bonnar). The programme featured original covert KGB footage showing Penkovsky photographing classified information and meeting up with [Janet Chisholm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janet_Chisholm), a British MI6 agent stationed in Moscow. It was broadcast on 15 January 2007.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oleg_Penkovsky#cite_note-22)

Penkovsky was referred to in four of [Tom Clancy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Clancy)'s [Jack Ryan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Ryan_(Tom_Clancy_character)) espionage novels: [*The Hunt for Red October*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hunt_for_Red_October) (1984), [*The Cardinal of the Kremlin*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cardinal_of_the_Kremlin) (1988), ‘’[The Bear and the Dragon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bear_and_the_Dragon)’’ (2000) and [*Red Rabbit*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Rabbit) (2002). In the Jack Ryan universe, he is described as the agent who recruited Colonel Mikhail Filitov as a CIA agent (code-name CARDINAL) and had urged Filitov to betray him to solidify his position as the West's top spy in the Soviet hierarchy. The "cremated alive" hypothesis appears in several Clancy novels, though Clancy never identified Penkovsky as the executed spy. Penkovsky's fate is also mentioned in the [Nelson DeMille](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_DeMille) spy novel [*The Charm School*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Charm_School_(novel)) (1988).

Penkovsky was portrayed by Eduard Bezrodniy in the 2014 Polish thriller [*Jack Strong*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Strong_(film)), about [Ryszard Kukliński](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryszard_Kukli%C5%84ski" \o "Ryszard Kukliński), another [Cold War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War) spy. His character's execution was the opening scene for the movie. Penkovsky was portrayed by [Merab Ninidze](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merab_Ninidze" \o "Merab Ninidze) in the 2020 British film [*The Courier*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Courier_(2020_film)), in which [Benedict Cumberbatch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict_Cumberbatch) played Greville Wynne.

See also[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Oleg_Penkovsky&action=edit&section=7)]

* [Gervase Cowell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gervase_Cowell)
* [George Kisevalter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Kisevalter)

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**Chinese Defector Reveals Beijing’s (Innermost) Secrets**

***U.S. intelligence is debriefing brother of former presidential aide, translating documents***

*Ling Jihua, provided sensitive documents to his brother, defector Ling Wancheng / AP Ling Wancheng (Chinese Media)*

**Bill Gertz**, ***The Washington Free Beacon,*** February 3, 2016

*A defector from China has revealed some of the innermost secrets of the Chinese government and military, including details of its nuclear command and control system, according to American intelligence officials.*

Businessman Ling Wancheng disappeared from public view in California last year shortly after his brother, Ling Jihua, a former high-ranking official in the Communist Party, was arrested in China on corruption charges.

Ling Wancheng, the defector, has been undergoing a debrief by FBI, CIA, and other intelligence officials since last fall at a secret location in the United States, said officials familiar with details of the defection who spoke on condition of anonymity. The defector is said to be a target of covert Chinese agents seeking to capture or kill him.

Among the information disclosed by Ling are *details about the procedures used by Chinese leaders on the use of nuclear weapons, such as the steps taken in preparing nuclear forces for attack and release codes for nuclear arms.*

Other secrets revealed included *details about the Chinese leadership and its facilities, including the compound in Beijing known as Zhongnanhai*. That information is said to be valuable for U.S. electronic spies, specifically for cyber intelligence operations targeting the secretive Chinese leadership.

Spokesmen for the White House, FBI, CIA, and Department of Homeland Security declined to comment on the case.

Other officials said Ling defected sometime in the summer of 2015 after his brother, once the senior administrative aide to former Chinese leader Hu Jintao, came under suspicion for leaking state secrets.

Intelligence officials said Ling, if confirmed as a legitimate defector in debriefings over the next several months, would have the most privileged information of any defector from China to the United States in more than 30 years.

“This is an intelligence windfall,” said one senior official.

The events surrounding Ling’s defection and his brother’s arrest appear to be part of a complex internal power struggle in China led by current leader Xi Jinping targeting hundreds of Party leaders and officials. Under the guise of a nationwide anticorruption drive within the Chinese leadership, Xi is said to be systematically removing rivals from previous administrations.

Officials said Ling Wancheng is being kept under tight security after U.S. intelligence agencies detected the activity of covert Chinese agents tasked with tracking down Chinese nationals sought by the government.

The defection was triggered by the arrest of Ling’s brother, Ling Jihua, a former presidential aide who secretly obtained some 2,700 internal documents from a special Communist Party unit he headed until 2012. The unit was in charge of storing and archiving classified documents.

Ling Jihua then gave the documents to his brother, who owns a $2.5 million residence in Loomis, California, near Sacramento. The classified documents were transferred between the brothers as a safety measure: They were intended to be used as leverage to dissuade Chinese authorities from taking action against Ling Jihua.

According to the officials, Ling Wancheng, the defector, kept the documents for safekeeping and was directed to release them to U.S. authorities in the event Ling Jihua were arrested.

China announced in July it was prosecuting Ling Jihua for disclosing secrets, taking bribes, conducting illicit sexual affairs, and using his position to benefit relatives. The former official is currently undergoing harsh interrogation in China.

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Pillsbury’s 2015 book *The 100-Year Marathon* draws on data provided by five Chinese defectors.

“Over the last three decades, Chinese defectors have been a vital source of insights about the secrets Beijing wants to keep from Washington,” said Pillsbury.

“Very few defectors wrote about it or gave interviews,” he added.

One important defector was Yu Qiansheng, an official with the Ministry of State Security, who defected in 1985 and revealed that CIA analyst Larry Wu-Tai Chin was a spy for China. Yu is the brother of current Chinese Politburo Standing Committee member Yu Zhengsheng, currently one of the most powerful leaders in China.

More recently, China’s leading dissident, the astrophysics professor Fang Lizhi, revealed details about secret internal debates in a book.

“Let’s hope more defectors come out to reveal Beijing’s secret debates,” Pillsbury said.

Former State Department China hand John J. Tkacik said Ling likely can provide new details of Chinese power struggles, such as the cases of ousted security chief Zhou Yongkang and imprisoned regional Party chief Bo Xilai.

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The first details of the Ling case were disclosed in two dissident Chinese magazines in Hong Kong, *Qianshao* and *Chenming*, in November. The London *Sunday Times* first reported the magazines’ disclosures, some of which were confirmed by U.S. officials.

According to the *Chenming*, China’s senior internal security chief Meng Jianzhu disclosed details of what he called one of China’s most damaging betrayals at a closed-door meeting of Party officials in southern China.

Ling Jihua was accused of carrying out the document theft some time between June 2012 and his arrest on July 20, 2015.

After the arrest, a special task force of Chinese security and intelligence agencies was formed to assess the damage. The task force finished its work in September.

As a result, 72 senior officials out of a total 85 officials in 19 offices under Ling Jihua were replaced and at least 55 people were under investigation by last fall.

The *Chenming* report said that as a result of the compromises, Chinese Politburo offices came under cyber attack for several months. Additionally, telephone and computer equipment was replaced over security concerns.

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The documents were taken during a month-long transition after Ling Jihua was replaced in July 2012. The office he headed was in charge of protecting government and military secrets.

During an investigation of Ling’s residence, Chinese authorities discovered that 2,700 secret documents had been photocopied. Most of the photocopies had been produced after September 2012, when Ling Jihua was transferred to another government ministry.

The secrets included security passcodes and communications codes used at Zhongnanhai, blueprints, and command and control information used by Communist leaders and the State Council, the cabinet, and the Central Military Commission.

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The officials’ claims to have warned about Ling suggest one of the officials may have leaked the information.

According to *Chengming*, Hu Jintao suffered a stroke during a meeting on the Ling affair and was hospitalized. Hu was last seen in public in early May 2015.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Ling Wancheng, who lived in California under the names Wang Cheng and Jason Wang, was an avid golfer and executive of a golf management and financial firm called Asian Pacific Group, which owns golf courses in California and Nevada. He had lived in the Loomis mansion since 2013.

Efforts to contact an Asian Pacific Group executive, Li Shuhai, were unsuccessful.

The newspaper reported that two agents from the Department of Homeland Security questioned neighbors about Ling in the spring or summer of 2015.

Ling Wancheng was a former journalist for two state-run Chinese news outlets and later became a wealthy financial investor with a Beijing firm called Huijin Lifang Investment Management Center.

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[**NATIONAL SECURITY**](https://freebeacon.com/national-security/)

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