PS1 for 4/23/87#MEDIA COVERUP OF HIGHER-UPS

The revelations of sex and spying by Marines at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow made good television drama. It was more exciting than the sitcoms and soaps: handsome young men in bed with beautiful Mata Haris, and security so compromised that poor George Shultz had to communicate with his aides in a mobile home and Embassy personnel communicated on Mickey Mouse children's slates so the Soviets wouldn't be able to eavesdrop or rescue bits of paper from the wastebasket.

Everybody knows that all super powers engage in spying (euphemistically called intelligence gathering) against their perceived enemies. ""Bugs'' in shoes and typewriters are expected, but using experienced KGB prostitutes to seduce our young Marines in order to get inside our Embassy? That's really taking unfair advantage!

We know now that the Soviets have been privy to all our secrets that went through the U.S. Embassy and Leningrad consulate for the last six years. That includes all the preparations for the Geneva and Reykjavik summits and the continuing arms control negotiations. It's like the Americans having to play poker with a mirror behind us so that the Soviets can always see the cards in our hand.

But this column isn't about the espionage. It's about the way the television newscasts reported the spy revelations and their aftermath.

When the American pols and public began to express indignation at what the Soviets had done, the Kremlin commissars of contrived communication took advantage of their easy access to American media and put on their own ""show and tell,'' demonstrating listening devices allegedly planted by U.S. agents. After the nightly newscasts had given generous coverage to the Soviets, the TV reporters solemnly concluded that ""no one knows which side is better at spying, but it's clear that the Soviets are better at propaganda.''

Indeed, it is true that the Soviets are better at propaganda. But the reason that makes such a big difference is that the networks gave the Russians so many expensive primetime minutes to air their propaganda.

Just as interesting as the way the television moguls rushed to give a free platform to the Russians to rant about alleged U.S. espionage is the way that television covered up WHO was responsible. Again and again, we were shown pictures of the Marines who were sent to the brig, and even of Congressmen calling for the death penalty for espionage.

But where are the pictures of the Marines' superiors -- the State Department careerists, both those at Foggy Bottom who set the policies of accommodation and lax security, and those at the Embassy who were so causal about security? Why aren't their pictures on the tube so they, too, can be held up to shame and suspicion?

Ah, yes, we saw pictures of George Shultz saying ""this is a terrible situation.'' But what about all those echelons of State Department careerists between Shultz and the Marines who failed to properly supervise the Marines and warn them of the penalties?

The Marine scandal also broke open another scandal about the agreement under which the new Soviet Embassy was built in Washington on the highest hill in the area, from which modern electronic devices can intercept anything because they have a clear line to every office building, while the new U.S. Embassy in Moscow was built in a valley.

How did we fall into the trap of such a lopsided agreement? ABC's Nightline posed this question and aired a program to answer it. ABC did a good job of telling us that most security and intelligence officials opposed this deal during 1969 to 1972 when it was being negotiated. Those advisers, we were told, were overruled by higher-ups.

Ted Koppel pressed hard. Do you mean that intelligence officials in every branch of government opposed the Embassy deal and even submitted written memos? The answer was yes, but the intelligence advisers were overruled by their superiors because we were then in a period of ""detente'' and nothing was allowed to interfere with signing the 1972 SALT/ABM agreements.

But ABC didn't tell us who those superiors were. Anybody who bothers to check the history of 1969-1972 will discover that Henry Kissinger then exercised total control over U.S.-Soviet relations and all our foreign and defense policies. ABC never mentioned that essential fact, leaving the audience to speculate about WHO were the superiors who overruled ""all'' our security and intelligence advisers about the Embassy deal.

Why don't the media demand that the State Department come clean and tell all? Why don't the media demand that those responsible be ferreted out and publicly humiliated (as TV did to Donald Regan)? Why is there no demand for an independent counsel to find out if any laws were violated? Somehow, big media don't seem interested in finding out.