Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/07/22 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000303050019-2

STAT

ARTICLE APPEARED ON PAGE 3-A

WASHINGTON TIMES
24 December 1985

Courier charged in Soviet spying case

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A courier with a stenographic reporting firm that transcribes top-secret and secret sessions of the House of Representatives was charged yesterday with turning over portions of a top-secret document to the Soviet Union during meetings with Soviet officials.

Randy Miles Jeffries, 26, was ordered held without bond by U.S. Magistrate Jean Dwyer yesterday, pending a preliminary hearing set for U.S. District Court today.

In Baltimore, accused Soviet spy Ronald Pelton, a former National Security Agency communications expert, pleaded not guilty to six counts of espionage covering a five-year period.

Mr. Pelton was one of two former intelligence community officials uncovered by Soviet intelligence officer Vitaly Yurchenko who defected to the United States and later returned.

Following his departure from the NSA in 1979, Mr. Pelton allegedly traveled to Vienna, Austria, to meet with a Soviet official who paid him $20,000 in 1980 for NSA communications secrets, a court indictment charged.

Prosecutors in the case charged that Mr. Pelton had access to some of the NSA's most secret intelligence information.

If convicted, Mr. Pelton faces a maximum term of life in prison. His trial is scheduled to begin March 24.

Mr. Jeffries was arrested last Friday night after he told an FBI undercover agent posing as a Soviet spy he planned to deliver three documents in exchange for $5,000 after meeting twice with officials of the Soviet embassy's military and naval office in northwest Washington, according to the FBI.

A criminal complaint filed in the case yesterday stated that a coworker of Mr. Jeffries' at the Acme Reporting Co. told FBI agents he had asked Mr. Jeffries to tear up documents labeled "secret" and "top secret" on Dec. 14 and that Mr. Jeffries had stolen about 200 of the documents which he hid in the basement of 1220 L St. NW.

The complaint said the documents Mr. Jeffries was asked to tear up related to "naval" and "strategic" matters.

The unidentified witness told the FBI Mr. Jeffries said "he knew where he could get good money for the documents and that he needed to find a Russian to sell the documents to," the complaint stated.

A search of the Acme premises last Saturday uncovered "numerous documents which had been ripped in four pieces" in a plastic trash can, the complaint said. The majority of the documents were classified "secret" and "top secret" and "related to the national defense," it added.

At the hearing yesterday, Mr. Jeffries' attorney, G. Allen Dale, asked the magistrate to dismiss the complaint because he said Mr. Jeffries did not deliver, or attempt to deliver, documents that would injure U.S. national security.

Mr. Dale said the complaint contained "an unsubstantiated confession by my client."

"It is just an idle boast by my client," he said of Mr. Jeffries' remarks to the undercover FBI agent.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Rhonda Fields requested that Mr. Jeffries be held without bond because the maximum sentence he could receive was life in prison and, thus, he might flee.

But she was asked by the court to amend the complaint to reflect charges that top-secret material was passed to the Soviets and that the material could cause damage to U.S. national security.

After a short recess, prosecutors stated that the original complaint should not be changed because it charged Mr. Jeffries "had delivered to [the Soviets] portions of documents, one of which was top secret."

The magistrate described an FBI affidavit attached to the complaint as "about as thin an affidavit as has been seen recent years," but ordered Mr. Jeffries held another 24 hours until prosecutors could file a complaint "with a lot more meat."

Outside the federal courthouse, Mr. Dale told reporters Mr. Jeffries "denies the charges."

"There was no attempt to deliver and no delivery" of defense secrets, Mr. Dale said.

In a related development, Steven Ross, House of Representatives legal adviser, told reporters outside the courthouse that the House Clerk's office has begun a review of security clearance procedures for reporting on closed House sessions.

Six staff members of the House Clerk's office have been cleared by the Pentagon to transcribe closed House hearings and that in some cases firms outside Congress can bid for work when there is an overload, he said.

Mr. Ross said "three or four" companies of eight to 10 reporting companies have been cleared by the Defense Department to handle transcriptions of closed hearings. The Defense Department conducts background checks of individuals and examines facilities of outside companies that handle secret material, he said.

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/07/22 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000303050019-2