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SPY TRIAL BRINGS WARNING ON NEWS

Intelligence Officials Caution Reporters on 'Speculation'

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 28 — The Director of Central Intelligence and the head of the National Security Agency today warned news organizations against reporting on the implications of the declassified information disclosed at the trial of Ronald W. Pelton.

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In an unusual statement issued this evening, William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence, and Lieut. Gen. William E. Odom, head of the N.S.A., said: "Those reporting on the trial should be cautioned against speculation and reporting details beyond the information actually released at trial. Such speculation, and additional facts, are not authorized disclosures and may cause substantial harm to the national security."

There has been in the past a reluctance among intelligence agencies to bring prosecutions against spies out of fear that too much sensitive information would be revealed.

The trial of Mr. Pelton opened Tuesday with testimony from National Security Agency officials and statements from prosecutors describing, in general terms, the nature of the agency's projects that the government has charged were disclosed to the Soviet Union. The National Security Agency responsible for intercepting and decoding communications, is one of the Government's most secret agencies.

Opposition to Prosecution

Administration officials have said that the security agency has fought hard against prosecutors who wanted broader disclosures of information in order to build the best possible case against Mr. Pelton. The agency, which was uncomfortable about the prosecution from the beginning, has been consistently opposed to revealing all but the most general of details about its operations.

John Douglass, the assistant United States attorney prosecuting the case, said in court Tuesday that one reason for keeping the details secret was that other hostile countries would be eager to learn about the capabilities purportedly disclosed to the Soviet Union by Mr. Pelton.

The statement reflects tensions within the Administration and it comes on the heels of earlier warnings by Mr. Casey to news organizations against publishing information on the case.

Last week, Mr. Casey asked the Justice Department to consider prosecuting NBC for a report that described one of the projects, code-named Ivy Bells, as a submarine eavesdropping operation in Soviet harbors.

Administration officials said, however, that the threat was largely aimed at The Washington Post, which has obtained details about the projects Mr. Pelton handled while at N.S.A. The Post withheld those details from a story it published last week. In its Tuesday editions, after the prosecution provided sketchy descriptions of the projects, The Post published a news analysis that for the first time revealed the precise location of one of the listening devices said to have been compromised by Mr. Pelton. That location was not mentioned in court by Mr. Douglass, he prosecutor.

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