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3rd Marine Accused Of Spying

Allegations Date From 1981-82 Tour As Leningrad Guard

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A Marine who once guarded the U.S. consulate in Leningrad has been arrested on suspicion of espionage, raising to four the number of Marines implicated in an expanding investigation of security breaches at U.S. diplomatic posts, Defense Department officials said yesterday.

Sgt. John Joseph Weirick, 26, of Eureka, Calif., a guard at U.S. missions in Moscow, Leningrad and Rome, allegedly committed espionage while involved with a Soviet woman in Leningrad, Pentagon spokesman Robert Sims said.

The pattern is similar to cases of two Marine guards charged with espionage after serving as guards at the Moscow compound.

Secretary of State George P. Shultz, briefing reporters on his upcoming trip to Moscow, said that, as head of the Marine guard's "chain of command," he accepts responsibility for the security breaches in Moscow, said to be among the most serious at any U.S. embassy.

"Unfortunately, as is so often the case when we are in the midst of potentially promising discussions with the Soviets, the discussions take place in a difficult environment generated by their actions, and these things cast a heavy shadow on our discussions," Shultz said.

In Moscow, a senior Kremlin official accused the United States of attempting to poison the atmosphere before Shultz's arrival. And the Soviet government said it would present evidence today showing that the U.S. conducted surveillance against its operations in the United States. [Details, Page A37.]

Congressional anger about the security breaches continued as Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.) suggested to FBI Director William H. Webster that his agency investigate State Department personnel assigned to Moscow under a section of the espionage law that makes it a crime to allow classified information to reach unauthorized hands through "gross negligence."

"And if you nail a regional security officer and an ambassador who's in charge, all ambassadors will wake up," Hollings said.

Webster, speaking at the first day of hearings on his nomination to be director of central intelligence, agreed with Hollings that security was lax in Moscow and said he would ask the Justice Department whether the FBI has jurisdiction.

The charges against Weirick illustrate how the investigation into Marines' conduct is expanding. Weirick allegedly committed the offenses while stationed in Leningrad from November 1981 to December 1982, about four years before the two Moscow guards allegedly engaged in similar activities, Sims said.

With the arrest of Weirick, confined at Camp Pendleton, Calif., the investigation has expanded to the Rome embassy where he worked for a year after leaving Leningrad, officials said.

Weirick, who is married, has not been implicated in wrongdoing in Rome or Moscow where he was an embassy guard for a month before serving in Leningrad, officials said.

Sims said officials are considering recalling the five Marine guards at Leningrad, in addition to 28 ordered to leave Moscow. Those guards have not yet left Moscow, although 14 replacements are in Frankfurt, Germany, Sims said.

Pentagon officials also announced that another Moscow guard, Staff Sgt. Robert S. Stufflebeam, has been charged with failing to report personal contacts with Soviet women on three occasions while serving in Moscow in 1984.

Stufflebeam was deputy commander of the guard unit while Sgt. Clayton J. Lonetree, 25, and Cpl. Arnold Bracy, 21, charged with espionage, were stationed in Moscow.

Reagan administration sources said Weirick allegedly was "compromised into cooperating with a Soviet agent" after becoming sexually involved with a Soviet woman. Sources said he allegedly allowed a Soviet agent to enter the consulate "on more than one occasion."

Lonetree and Bracy also allegedly were seduced by Soviet women, who worked in the embassy, and allegedly allowed Soviet agents access to the Moscow embassy, according to case documents.

Weirick was assigned to the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing at Marine Corps Air Station in Tustin, Calif., until his arrest Tuesday. Officials said he will be moved to confinement at Quantico Marine Base, where Lonetree and Bracy are being held.

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Shultz, who is to leave Saturday for Moscow, said the Marine guards report through "a clear clean chain of command" to the ambassador and added: "The ambassador reports to me. So I'm responsible."

At times sounding defensive about charges that his department has been lax about Moscow embassy security, Shultz recounted steps taken to prevent implanting eavesdropping devices in the new chancery. President Reagan said Tuesday that he might order the $100 million structure torn down if security defects cannot be rectified.

Shultz said members of a panel headed by former defense secretary Melvin R. Laird to study State Department procedures will be former CIA director Richard M. Helms; retired Army general John W. Vessey Jr., former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Diego C. Asencio, a retired ambassador and assistant secretary of state.

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Shultz said work on the new embassy by Soviet construction crews had been monitored by 40 to 50 Navy Seabees. But he was unable to say why it had taken so long to ascertain that the Soviets had implanted listening devices.

"In some cases, we got less than we contracted for, and you might say there are other cases in which we got more . . . . We want what we contracted for," Shultz added.

Staff writers George Lardner Jr. and Bill McAllister contributed to this report.

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Correction

In recent issues, NEWSWEEK *reported that former CIA director Richard Helms was "prosecuted in 1977 for lying to Congress" and had pleaded "no contest" to a charge of perjury. In fact, Helms pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor charge of failing to testify "fully, completely and accurately" before a Senate committee.*

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