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3 Secret Photos Called Nothing New to Soviets

AU Professor Testifies in Navy Spy Trial

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BALTIMORE, Oct. 11—Publication of three secret KH-11 spy satellite photos in a British magazine last year told the Soviets nothing important that they did not know already, according to testimony today at the espionage trial of former Navy intelligence analyst Samuel Loring Morison.

Testifying for the defense, American University Prof. Jeffrey T. Richelson, who has made several studies of U.S. satellite reconnaissance programs, said that the Soviets already had the KH-11 manual, which they had bought from a CIA officer, as well as earlier satellite photos to show them how the system worked.

"It just didn't really tell me anything that I didn't know," Richelson said of the August 1984 publication in Jane's Defence Weekly of three KH-11 photos showing a nuclear-powered Soviet aircraft under construction at a Black Sea shipyard. "I don't think they provide any new information. Therefore I don't think it's of any value."

Morison has been accused of espionage and theft for taking the photos from a colleague's desk at the Naval Intelligence Support Center in Suitland, and sending them to Jane's in hopes of securing a full-time job there. He was also indicted on charges of keeping in his apartment two classified documents about a May 1984 fire at a Soviet naval ammunition depot.

Government witnesses have testified that the leak to Jane's was potentially valuable to the Soviets in confirming the KH-11's sophisticated workings and in disclosing U.S. targeting interests. Similarly, a Navy intelligence expert, Capt. Robert W. Chapin Jr., testified that the details about the ammunition depot fires, also gleaned from satellite photos, were so precise that it would have been "very damaging" to the United States if the documents had been leaked.

Richelson, however, said public sources have provided much detail about the KH-11 and other satellite programs, such as their flight paths over the Soviet Union, their altitude (75 to 155 miles), and the fact that they and another so-called Keyhole

satellite, the KH-9, are launched by a Titan 3D rocket. He rattled off the data so fast that at one point U.S. District Judge Joseph Young interrupted him angrily, evidently in fear that some classified data might be tumbling out.

"I don't want you rambling on as though you were teaching a course at American University, is that understood?" Young demanded.

Richelson, who did a three-volume study on what was publicly available about the satellite reconnaissance programs only to see the compilation classified Top Secret, said that he did.

He said it was well known that that the KH-11 sends its pictures back to Washington by way of another satellite in a matter of seconds and that it passes over targets quite frequently.

Another defense witness, John Pike, associate director for space policy at the Federation of American Scientists, testified as a layman expert on what is publicly available about the KH-11.

He said it is due to be replaced shortly by a longer-lasting successor, the KH-12. According to Pike, the KH-11 orbits the Soviet Union 11 times a day, has the capacity to take pictures continuously, and has a peripheral vision that can switch from extreme left to extreme right in an instant.

The government rested its case this morning with a final burst of testimony about the retrieval of the three photos from Jane's, one of

which was found to carry Morison's right thumbprint.

Vice Adm. Sir Roy Halliday, director of British military intelligence until last fall, said the pictures were returned to him at Whitehall Sept. 12, 1984, by messenger from Jane's Defence Weekly. In the same envelope was a note from Jane's Managing Director Sidney Jackson that said "no security classification or other information appeared on the prints. The cut in the top left-hand corner was made before we received them."

Morison later admitted to the FBI that he cut the Secret markings from the top of the photos.

Halliday said outside court today that Jane's, which could have been subjected to Britain's Official Secrets Act, yielded the photos readily.