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Espionage cases rise to record in arrest of veteran CIA analyst

By Bill Gertz
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The weekend arrest of a former CIA analyst on charges of spying for the People's Republic of China for more than 30 years has brought the number of espionage arrests this year to a record 15.

Larry Wu-tai Chin, 63, was arrested Saturday in Alexandria. Two days earlier, Jonathan Jay Pollard, a Navy intelligence expert, was arrested on charges of spying for several foreign governments. His wife, Anne Henderson-Pollard, was arrested later and charged with gathering national defense information.

In a year marked by increasingly frequent and public espionage arrests, the new cases have focused attention on security and counterintelligence procedures in the CIA and at the Pentagon. Intelligence experts say it is likely to speed security reforms in the intelligence agencies.

Mr. Chin, who was an interpreter in the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, was charged with spying for Peking since 1952. He is believed to have received more than \$140,000 for the information.

FBI Director William Webster said in a weekend statement that the arrest was the result of a continuing "extensive investigation" by the FBI and CIA.

On Thursday, the FBI agents arrested Mr. Pollard on charges of spying for several foreign governments, including Israel. Mrs. Henderson-Pollard was arrested Saturday for possessing classified documents.

Mr. Pollard, 31, a civilian employee of the Naval Investigative Service, is suspected of supplying secret data to Israel and Pakistan in exchange for cash.

Intelligence sources said Mr. Pollard's activities may have included selling secrets to communist bloc nations and that more details on the case will be forthcoming. Some of claims made by Mr. Pollard — in questioning before and after his arrest — about the scope of his contacts with foreign governments were being viewed skeptically by some intelligence sources.

Court papers filed in the case said Mr. Pollard was interviewed by FBI agents last Monday and that following the interview he told his wife to "remove certain articles" from the couple's Northwest Washington apartment.

Mrs. Pollard then transferred a suitcase with secret "national defense" documents that was later recovered by FBI and Navy security agents, the papers state.

The Pollards have been charged with delivering "highly classified"

papers to representatives of unnamed "foreign governments." Mr. Pollard was arrested last Thursday after Israeli Embassy officials escorted him out of the embassy compound, where the FBI said he was attempting to seek political asylum.

The Chin and Pollard cases bring the number of espionage arrests this year to 15, with former CIA operative Edward Lee Howard the only espionage suspect still a fugitive. Howard vanished from under an FBI surveillance net in New Mexico last September and is believed to have fled the country. Federal officials have said information from Howard led Soviet authorities to a CIA mole in the Soviet avionics industry.

By contrast, the FBI arrested only eight people for espionage in the past three years — two each in 1983 and 1984, and four in 1982.

Sen. Malcolm Wallop, a 10-year veteran of the Senate Intelligence Committee until this year, said he believed the increase in espionage cases involving government employees is due to counterintelligence reforms he and other members of the committee initiated in the early 1980s.

"I think that some of the counterintelligence capabilities that we, and mainly I, have forced on the [intelligence] community are beginning to bear fruit," Mr. Wallop said in an interview. "They didn't like them; they do like them now."

But he said more widespread security and counterintelligence reforms are needed at the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

"It's an interesting thing that what they didn't want, they still boast of, and what they still need, they continue to resist," he said of several counterintelligence programs proposed by the committee but not implemented by the intelligence community.

He urged the intelligence community to adopt "two very professional characteristics" toward hostile intelligence agency threats: "One is the humility to think you could be fooled; and, two, the skepticism" required in case U.S. intelligence agencies are being fooled by other services.

Intelligence experts say the Chin case is a serious intelligence failure because the transfer of CIA secrets to the Chinese communists allegedly continued for more than 30 years. Sino-American relations and cooperation have grown stronger in recent years, but experts point out that Mr. Chin is suspected of having spied for China prior to the Sino-Soviet split of 1959-60 when Peking was closely allied with the Soviet Union.

Although Mr. Chin held what appears to be a mid-level position as an FBIS interpreter for 31 years, his alleged espionage activities have been described as "very damaging" to U.S. security. That damage, however, was not as severe as that inflicted by the Walker family espionage ring, which transferred top secret Navy communications codes to the Soviets, one intelligence source said.

Court papers identify Mr. Chin as a staff intelligence officer for foreign documents at FBIS from 1970 until 1981, a position that would have given him access to top secret material. Passing such intelligence data could have compromised U.S. intelligence methods and sources with regard to a wide range of geographic and political intelligence, the source said.

Former CIA official George Carver, who worked on Asian analyses among other responsibilities, said he suspected the Chinese might have sought information about U.S. relations with Japan and Korea and especially Taiwan, the general military posture of U.S. forces and the state of U.S.-Soviet relations.

"The Chin case is serious because it went on so long," Mr. Carver said in an interview.

He said it will be difficult for the public to know the full extent of the national security damage, "but it does indicate that our internal security needs to be tightened up."

Mr. Carver, now a senior research fellow at the Georgetown University

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Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the Chin case "overlaps" problems of CIA counter-intelligence and personnel security problems.

"You have to guard against hostile penetrations, but you also have to guard against hiring the kind of people who are vulnerable to external pressure," he said. "[CIA employees]

don't like someone looking over their shoulders, they don't like someone looking into their private affairs, [and] they don't like people bringing them into suspicion because of things they might do."

Mr. Chin worked with the U.S. Army in 1943 and 1944 when, according to court papers, he was recruited by a communist identified as "Dr. Wang." He also worked as an interpreter in the American Consulate in Shanghai, China, in 1948.

Following the communist takeover, Mr. Chin moved to the American Consulate in Hong Kong as a secretary/interpreter and in 1952 joined FBIS, which monitors broadcasts and publications worldwide.

He was paid \$2,000 (Hong Kong dollars) in 1952 by Peking's intelligence service to provide the locations of prisoners of war from the Korean War, the court papers state. During his alleged spying activities, Mr. Chin met with communist Chinese intelligence officers in Toronto, Hong Kong and Peking. At those locations, Mr. Chin allegedly turned over undeveloped rolls of film containing photographs of CIA documents, the court papers state.

After leaving the CIA in 1981, Mr. Chin allegedly received \$50,000 in cash during a 1982 trip to Peking and in 1983 provided Chinese officials with the name of a FBIS employee who Mr. Chin believed was vulnerable to recruitment as a Chinese agent.

The investigation of Mr. Chin began in December 1983, according to the court documents.

Lawyers for Mr. Chin said they will appeal his detention at a bond hearing set for Wednesday. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

The Pollards each could face a 10-year prison term and a \$10,000 fine if convicted.



Former CIA analyst Larry Wu-tai Chin, 63, is taken handcuffed over the weekend to an Alexandria court to be formally charged with espionage.