

Defecting Security Clerks May Have Missing Notes

Washington, Sept. 15 (AP)

The Defense Department said today some handwritten briefing notes available to the two American code clerks who defected to Soviet Russia are missing.

J. Vincent Burke Jr., Defense Department general counsel, gave that testimony as the first witness in a House armed services subcommittee investigation of the defection of the clerks. Bernon F. Mitchell and William H. Martin

The two clerks defected to Russia in July via Mexico and Cuba and turned up in Moscow in early September with a denouncement of their own country.

Burke told the committee, meeting in closed session, that there is no evidence at this point that Martin and Mitchell were part of an espionage ring or that they had an accomplice or accomplices here or elsewhere.

Burke's statement, released to newsmen, made these two other points:

"1. In the case of Mitchell and Martin, they can cause no damage to the security of our own communications. They can, however, assist the Soviets in their efforts to render secure Soviet communications activities.

"2. So far as can be determined,

no documents are missing. However, it is possible that copies of documents could have been made by them, although there is no evidence thus far which would indicate such to be the case.

Burke said no equipment is missing from the National Security Agency, where Martin and Mitchell worked but that some handwritten briefing notes to which Martin had access, are unaccounted for at this time.

"There are two possibilities," Burke said, "perhaps equally likely: (1) that the notes were destroyed by their originator after having served their purpose or (2) the notes were removed from the building by Mitchell or Martin."

Burke did not elaborate on the unaccounted-for notes. His earlier statement that no documents were missing indicated the investigators distinguished between formal government documents and informal briefing notes.

Congressional sources have reported earlier that there were indications at least one of the pair was a sexual deviate.

Burke's statement on this point said:

"In so far as sexual proclivities are concerned, the interviews,

tests, and investigations (concerning Mitchell) did not reveal any homosexual tendencies or acts.

"Parenthetically I should add that the same negative finding was made as to Martin. However, Mitchell did state during his interviews that before he was 19, he had experimented in abnormal sexual practices. The polygraph (lie detector) test established that Mitchell had not indulged in such practices for more than nine years prior to employment in NSA. In the opinion of the security evaluators, this adolescent experimentation was not, viewing his record as a whole, a sufficient basis for denying clearance."

The committee on Un-American Activities Wednesday questioned a psychiatrist whom Mitchell had consulted before he fled the country.

Dr. Clarence Schilt of Silver Spring, Md., said Mitchell discussed homosexuality, antagonism to his family, atheism and other matters, but gave no hint that he was on the verge of betraying his trust and defecting to Russia.

Dr. Schilt told a newsman he did not think Mitchell was being blackmailed. "I kind of think it was an intellectual decision," he said.