

NEWS DIGEST

your quick guide to news from around the world

CIA veteran charged with espionage

1 WASHINGTON — A onetime CIA station chief was charged Monday with selling top secrets to the Russians for more than \$120,000. The FBI suspects that the highest-ranking CIA officer ever charged with espionage sold the identities of all new CIA agent trainees in the past two years.

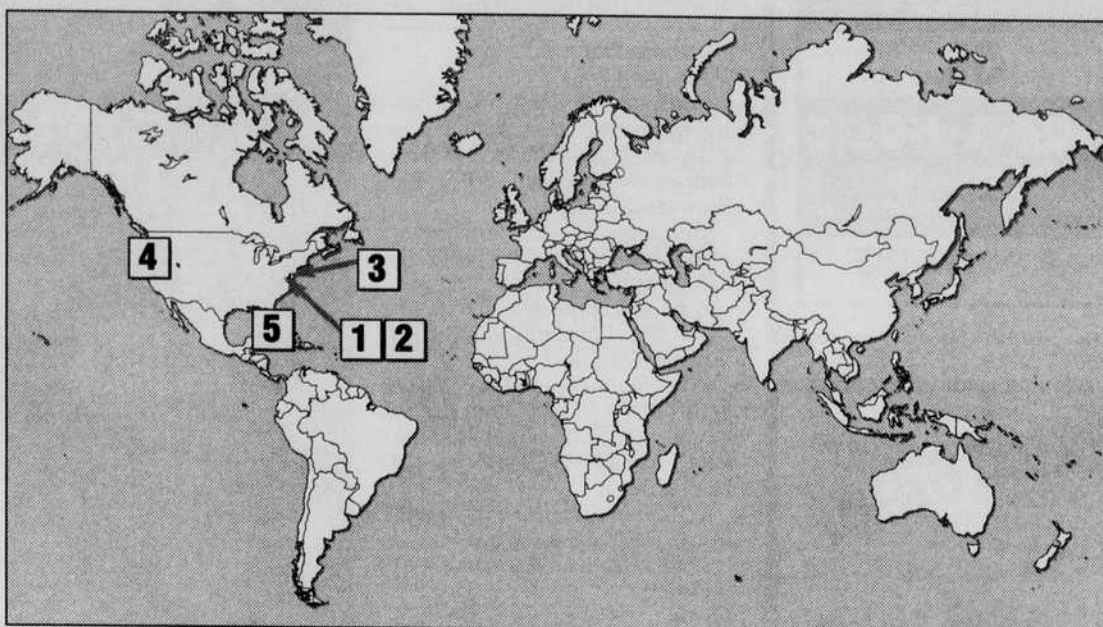
The 16-year CIA veteran, Harold J. Nicholson, 46, of Burke, Va., "betrayed his country for money. He was not motivated by ideology but by greed," said U.S. Attorney Helen Fahey. "He had access to a great deal of very damaging information."

An FBI affidavit said that Nicholson had access to the biographies and assignments of every new CIA agent trained from July 1994 to July 1996, when he taught at the CIA's secret Virginia training site, and that evidence strongly indicated Nicholson sold the material to the Russians.

"As a result of this disclosure, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the CIA to place some of these newly trained case officers into certain sensitive foreign postings for the rest of their careers," said FBI Agent Michael Loneran's affidavit.

Nicholson was arrested by FBI agents at Dulles International Airport in suburban Virginia Saturday afternoon as he was about to leave for Switzerland, where Fahey said he intended to meet his Russian handlers.

In a rare news conference with FBI Director Louis Freeh, CIA Director John Deutch said, "Thus far, we have no information that any CIA or FBI assets were killed as a result of Nicholson's spying." No U.S. agents or sources abroad appear to have been arrested either, officials said.



Troops await decision about relief mission

2 WASHINGTON — A decision on sending U.S. troops to central Africa to take part in a multinational relief mission was on hold Monday amid questions over whether the effort was needed.

Army troops stationed in Italy and Air Force transport planes in Europe and Africa were standing by in case they were ordered to take part, but no deployment order has been given for the mission.

The delay came as a half-million refugees poured across the border from Zaire to Rwanda in just three days.

Military planners and diplomats from more than a dozen nations who might participate were to meet Thursday in Stuttgart, Germany, to share information and discuss options, officials said.

The U.S. Agency for International Development is providing \$140 million to help humanitarian organizations and U.N. agencies in the region deal with the emergency.

Nixon tapes reveal desire to resign early

3 COLLEGE PARK, Md. — In a midnight conversation more than a year before he resigned as president, a dispirited Richard M. Nixon talked about giving up his office and said his vice president, Spiro Agnew, was "just panting to get at it."

But Nixon quickly allowed his chief of staff, Alexander M. Haig, to talk him out of quitting. Haig told Nixon that his resignation "would be the greatest shock this country ever had."

The telephone conversation is included in 201 hours of Nixon tapes — many hard to understand — made public Monday by the National Archives after a 22-year fight by Nixon and his daughters to keep them secret. Last April, Nixon's estate finally gave up.

The tapes offer dramatic glimpses into Nixon's mood as he fought to keep the Watergate scandal from consuming his presidency.

Residents oppose site for prison near school

4 WILSONVILLE — More than 4,600 people turned out to tell the state Department of Corrections they shouldn't build a new prison on a site located next to a school that is proposed for an urban village development.

"This is not about 'NIMBY,'" James Wheeler of Wilsonville said during a Sunday hearing that lasted 3 1/2 hours at Wilsonville High School. NIMBY is the acronym for "Not In My Back Yard."

"This is about the state forcing its will on you ..."

The state-owned site is the only one located near Portland of the 22 around the state being considered as locations to build five new prisons. The state plans to build the prisons next year to house a burgeoning inmate population created by tougher sentencing laws enacted by voters in 1994.

Speakers repeatedly objected to putting a prison next to residential neighborhoods and a middle school.

Last minutes of Flight 592 released for court

5 MIAMI, — Passengers screamed "Fire! Fire! Fire!" and a flight attendant warned, "We can't get oxygen back there" during the final terrifying moments before ValuJet Flight 592 plunged into the Everglades, killing all 110 people aboard.

The chilling eight-minute tape from the cockpit voice recorder ends with the cockpit and cabin falling silent, leaving the sound of rushing air, perhaps from a cockpit window that had been opened to let the smoke out.

A transcript of the recording was released Monday as a hearing opened on the mistakes that led to the May 11 crash. Federal investigators believe that 144 oxygen-generating canisters carried in the DC-9's cargo hold either ignited or fueled a fire.

Six minutes after takeoff from Miami International Airport, the pilot can be heard telling the copilot: "We got some electrical problems. ... We're losing everything."

A few seconds later, the voice recorder picked up screams of passengers in the cabin, including several women shouting, "Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!"

Over the next 51 seconds, shouts were heard from the cabin twice more and a flight attendant said only, "Completely on fire" before the cabin fell silent. The last recorded voice from the plane was that of a crew member telling the tower, "We need the, uh, closest airport available."

While the flight attendant warned that passengers could not get oxygen, National Transportation Safety Board investigator Greg Feith said there was not enough information to say what may have happened to the oxygen masks that drop down in front of passengers during an emergency.

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Information Session: Nov. 21, 1996 • 4:00 p.m. • Cedar AB

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