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National Intelligence Museum Pushed

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Walter Pforzheimer kept a wary eye on his priceless collection as the audience of retired spies, intelligence buffs and other unidentified characters milled about.

At one spot on the crowded tabletop was a photograph of Mata Hari and her last application to enter France, where she was executed in 1917. At another was a short-hand transcript of the trial of "John the Painter" (James Aitkin), the only American convicted of sabotage in England during the Revolutionary War.

Aitkin set fire to the Rope House at the Royal Dock Yard in Portsmouth in December, 1776, destroying a hefty supply of the British Navy's hemp and rope. "Regrettably," Pforzheimer concluded, "he was caught, tried and hanged in March, 1777."

The occasion for the impressive display—ranging from a 1777 letter from George Washington on "the necessity of procuring good intelligence" to an 1864 Confederate bill to create a "special and secret service"—was a Senate Select Intelligence Committee hearing on plans to establish a National Historical Intelligence Museum.

Pforzheimer, whose own world-class collection of almost 5,000 rare books, manuscripts and other items has already been bequeathed to Yale University, his alma mater, said he hoped a place in the nation's capital could be found for rotating exhibits, possibly including loans from his own holdings. He warned that much of the material that might be displayed—such as the photographic blow-ups used in the Cuban missile crisis—"is now scattered through the country and most of it, I fear, is permanently lost."

Pforzheimer, who served as the CIA's first legislative counsel, and other museum backers think a wing of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History would be just the spot.

"Think of the impact of such rotating exhibitions," Pforzheimer said, "not only on the grown-ups who are drawn to tales of intelligence and spies, but also on the kids who are so fond of gadgetry and the kind of exhibits that could be mounted."

CIA Director William J. Casey, the leadoff witness, heartily endorsed the idea so long as everyone realizes "that what the CIA can contribute will almost certainly be quite limited . . . I would not want to mislead anyone into expecting us to be a major source of exhibits for this projected historical intelligence museum."

The committee is co-sponsoring a resolution of moral support for the museum, but has not called for any federal financial support.

Committee Chairman Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) said, "We want to encourage private donors to assist in its construction and displays."

Goldwater, before leaving for Senate floor debate on the CIA-funded "secret war" in Nicaragua, added, "In other words, passage of this resolution will not cost the U.S. government money."

Martin Cramer, a veteran of the CIA, State Department and U.S. Information Agency who now heads an organization promoting the museum, said its backers are planning on a fund-raising drive next year to raise \$2 million from private sources.

"Although collection of artifacts from existing museums, private collectors and elsewhere will not be easy," Cramer said, "the location of many has been identified." He suggested that museum visitors would not only be able to look at the "bugged eagle from our embassy in Moscow" but also inspect enlarged microdots and learn how radio direction-finding equipment works.

For museum display, Joseph Persico, author of "Piercing the Reich," nominated a special radio-transmitter that Office of Strategic Services agents outside Berlin used in 1945 to guide allied bombers to their targets. Lt. Gen. William W. Quinn (U.S. Army-Ret.) urged that "tactical intelligence" exhibits be included, such as hedgerow maps and tide tables. Former CIA director William Colby added that a museum would go a long way toward showing that intelligence work is "an honorable profession."

Pforzheimer emphasized, however, that it would be very difficult to raise all the millions that would be needed to put up a new building as well as to fund a curator and staff. "An existing facility here appears to me to be the answer," he said.