

ST. LOUIS

FORMER CIA HEADS SAY TOO MUCH INTELLIGENCE MAY HAVE BEEN GIV

Two former Central Intelligence Agency heads say the release of information about the downed Korean airliner is the largest disclosure of U.S. intelligence capabilities in at least 20 years, a newspaper reported.

In a copyright story in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch's Sunday editions, the two former directors expressed worries the administration may have broached national security details previously not discussed in public.

"It is as high a release as we have seen since the Cuban Missile Crisis" of 1962, James R. Schlesinger said. He was CIA head and secretary of defense during the administrations of Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford.

"This was a deliberate decision to release more intelligence details than had ever been released before," said Adm. Stansfield Turner, CIA director under President Jimmy Carter.

He said reports out of Japan indicate the Soviet Union already has moved to limit the sort of eavesdropping that produced the tape recording of Soviet pilots chasing and shooting down the Korean Air Lines Boeing 747. The plane is presumed to have crashed with 269 persons aboard Sept. 1.

Soviet officials probably had been aware western intelligence sources could intercept non-coded radio messages, Turner said.

"But it's a lot different to disclose a specific capability," Turner said. "These people have said that at this time in this place, we intercepted this message."

Although administration officials attributed the recording to Japanese intelligence sources, they have sometimes indicated the United States has its own intelligence confirming the attack, the Post-Dispatch said.

For example, White House spokesman Larry Speakes last week said the administration had evidence beyond the tapes proving the Soviets could not have confused the plane with a U.S. spy jet.

He also suggested the government had access to recordings of the voices of Soviet ground controllers but later denied U.S. possession of any such tapes.

The administration had to acknowledge publicly for the first time that U.S. reconnaissance jets routinely patrol near the Soviet coast and that one of the jets had crossed the Korean airliner's path.

By the time Speakes was refusing to answer any more questions about those jets, it was too late, intelligence experts told the Post-Dispatch.

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