

Bundy Tells Ellsberg Trial Data Did Not Damage U.S.

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LOS ANGELES, March 9—McGeorge Bundy, one of the architects of America's Vietnam war policy, testified today that disclosure of three of the documents in the Pentagon papers case had not damaged the national defense.

Testifying with apparent assurance, Mr. Bundy referred to the documents as "the first cut of history" and said that they could best be understood that way, "not as an intelligence account."

Mr. Bundy served as special assistant for national security affairs to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and as such was called by the defense as an expert witness on three of the 19 "top secret-sensitive" documents now involved in this trial.

He spoke first of eight pages of a 1968 Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum, disclosure of which the Government has contended damaged the United States and could have been helpful to Hanoi during the Vietnam war.

Questioned by Defense

Under examination by Charles R. Nesson, a defense attorney, he was asked if either of those suppositions was true, and to both he answered, "I do not think so."

Mr. Bundy, who is now president of the Ford Foundation, gave three reasons for this.

One was that the most important part of the document, a recommendation by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to send 206,000 more troops to Vietnam, had become "common knowledge worldwide two weeks after it was written, initially in The New York Times." That disclosure in an article in The Times meant that the information "had ceased to be classified

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Manner Is Assured

Mr. Bundy gave his testimony under direct examination by Charles R. Nesson, a defense lawyer, in a calm and assured manner. He will be 53 years old at the end of this month. He is a slightly bald, plump man who wears steel-rimmed eyeglasses and who testified today in a two-button blue suit that bulged somewhat at the middle.

At first, he spoke with his hands clasped before him, but later he leaned back in the witness chair and faced the jury, somewhat like a lecturer in a classroom.

There had been some disension among defense aides over calling Mr. Bundy because some of them did not want to associate their cause with a man they considered one of the prime movers of America's war policy in Vietnam. And Mr. Bundy was at first somewhat reluctant to testify for the defense.

After taking the stand, Mr. Bundy detailed his expertise as a national security and foreign policy expert. He told the jury how he had served Presidents Kennedy and Johnson from 1961 through 1966, and he listed the national crises he had worked on as a top Presidential aide.

For example, he told the jury, there were the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban

missile crisis; there was the Vienna summit conference, and there was Laos; there was the Glassboro summit conference following the Israeli-Arab six-day war, and there was not only the war in Vietnam but also the "distraction" in the Dominican Republic in 1965.

He did not, however, mention the Gulf of Tonkin incident nor that he had helped to write the Gulf of Tonkin resolution.

Close to President

He told the jurors that his office in the White House had been close to the President's, in the basement beneath the Oval Office, and he told them, too, about the weekly Tuesday lunches he attended on the "second floor of the mansion" with President Johnson and Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Robert S. McNamara, the Defense Secretary.

He laughed depreciatingly when Mr. Nesson asked him if he had attended what has become known in the Government as "the meeting of the wise men" in March, 1968, after he had left the Government service. The meeting was called to discuss whether American troops in Vietnam should be increased.

"In modesty, I can't think of it that way, but I've seen it [the meeting] called that," he answered with a smile.

Before Mr. Bundy started to testify, Samuel A. Adams, a Central Intelligence Agency Analyst, the third defense witness, ended his testimony.

Dr. Ellsberg and Mr. Russo are charged with six counts of espionage, six of theft and one of conspiracy.