

SCHLESINGER CALLS SNOOPING IMPROPER

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (UPI) — Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger said today that the alleged Pentagon spy ring at the White House probably amounted only to "gross improprieties" that might have ended sooner had Adm. Thomas H. Moorer been more alert.

With Admiral Moorer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, standing at his side and saying nothing, Mr. Schlesinger answered questions on the snooping ring allegations following testimony at a House hearing on the defense budget.

"There appeared to be gross improprieties but nothing illegal" involved in the taking of secret White House diplomatic documents by military men in 1970 and 1971, Mr. Schlesinger said.

"As Admiral Moorer has indicated, he may have been insufficiently alert and perhaps should have taken more rapid action," when some of this material was passed to him, he said. But he added, "There isn't any evidence that Admiral Moorer directed these activities."