

Pentagon Papers Couldn't Harm, Schlesinger Says

Los Angeles

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., a member of the intimate circle of President Kennedy's administration, said yesterday that release of parts of the Pentagon Papers could not have harmed the national security.

"It is my belief that release could have been of advantage to the United States," Schlesinger told the jury at the trial of Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo.

DEFENSE

Schlesinger said, "The more they (the enemy) read this sort of thing, the better for our people."

Schlesinger was called by the defense in a parade of top-level witnesses led by McGeorge Bundy, who was a top assistant to President Johnson as well as Mr. Kennedy.

The defense asked Schle-

singer specifically about volume eight of 18 volumes of the Pentagon Papers which Ellsberg is accused of removing from Rand Corp. files.

Schlesinger said they were, in fact, an account of the years 1961-64 and Mr. Kennedy's plans to extricate the U.S. from the Vietnam war. He said those plans were overtaken by events after Mr. Kennedy's assassination.

Schlesinger said they were so outdated by 1969 that they could not have been of any possible use to an enemy power.

Bundy said that information in the documents about American military policy was of relatively little importance because the U.S. is such an "open society."

Bundy underwent extensive cross examination yesterday.

At the time Ellsberg al-

legedly took the documents from the files in 1969, Bundy said, there were at least three books on sale containing information similar to that in the Pentagon Papers.

TET

U.S. attorney David Nissen produced a report from the then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earl G. Wheeler, in 1968 summing up the Communist TET offensive and recommending that the U.S. send 206,000 more troops to Vietnam.

Nissen asked Bundy to assume that the U.S. had come into possession of a report by the North Vietnamese field commander to North Vietnam's President Ho Chi Minh containing Communist evaluations.

"Would not that report have been of extreme value to the United States?" Nissen asked.

"Yes," Bundy said. "It would have been of great importance."

The difference was that the U.S. was scraping for bits and pieces of information, Bundy said, and such a comprehensive document would have been of tremendous value.

The North Vietnamese, on the other hand, already had most of the information and were trying to pick out relevant matter from a great mass, he said.

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