

Trial likened to spy novels

Ex-CIA man under U.S. gun

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The Libyan arms smuggling trial of former CIA agent Edwin Wilson is a bizarre mix of foreign intrigue and black humor.

Wilson, 54, a multimillionaire who started an export business after leaving the CIA, is charged with conspiring to violate U.S. arms export laws in turning over four handguns and an M-16 to the Libyans.

Wilson's lawyers contend the operation was a CIA mission to learn more about Soviet weapons in Libya. The government was expected to rebut that claim in court Tuesday.

In testimony the opening day of the U.S. District Court trial Monday, nine government witnesses traced the paths of four handguns purchased in North

Carolina, and an M-16 automatic rifle formerly belonging to an Army general, into the hands of strongman Col. Muammar Khadafy and his associates.

The prosecution planned to complete its presentation Tuesday by calling two star witnesses: Adm. Bobby Ray Inman, former chief of the super-secret National Security Agency and former deputy CIA director, and Air Force Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, the top Pentagon expert on U.S. arms deals in the Mideast.

The military men are expected to rebut defense claims Wilson was with the CIA while operating out of the Libyan capital of Tripoli.

Monday's testimony was full of the intrigue that is grist for

spy novels — Swiss bank accounts, late-night rendezvous in Bonn and Tripoli to transfer weapons, and a jet chartered solely to deliver a single M-16 from Europe to the Libyan capital.

Prosecution witnesses testified about Wilson as a businessman who told his employees he needed to obtain handguns and an M-16 for use as samples to prove to the Libyans he could deliver a huge weapons shipment.

If convicted of all counts, Wilson could be fined \$245,000 and sentenced to 44 years in prison.

Reginald Slocombe, an unindicted co-conspirator testifying under immunity, described obtaining four handguns he carried in a tool box from Washington, via London and Rotterdam,

to Bonn, where they were turned over to a Libyan official.

Slocombe testified he hid an M-16 obtained in Washington in a trunk, packed with several iron bars to make it look like tools, and took it to Europe, where it was put on a charter flight to Tripoli.

A Wilson employee in London, Roberta Barnes, testified as a result of the shipment's success, the company landed a \$22 million contract to supply 5,000 rifles, assorted ammunition and handguns to the Libyans. None of the promised weapons, other than the samples, was ever delivered.

The trial also had its black humor. Wilson's London office manager, Peter Goulding, recounted his boss' description of the reaction of a Libyan military

officer in Tripoli when the M-16 was delivered.

"He loaded the weapon and gave it a full-function test out the window of his office," Goulding said.

Goulding said his boss "was roaring with laughter" as he described the event.

"He (Wilson) said it was probably the most expensive M-16 in the world," Goulding said. "It probably cost \$35,000, with the charter and all the other expenses. But he said it was successful."

Wilson also faces numerous charges in three upcoming trials, two in Washington and one in Houston, ranging from conspiracy to murder to conspiracy to set up a terrorist training camp in Libya and illegally exporting explosives.

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Factory output still declining

WASHINGTON — Factory production dropped 0.8 percent last month for the steepest decline in seven months as auto production and business equipment manufacturing were cut back, a Federal Reserve report said.

The closely-watched indicator of the nation's manufacturing output has declined in 13 of the past 15 months as it has paralleled the month-by-month deterioration of the economy since the recession began.

Auto production dropped to an annual rate of 4.7 million units, the report said, "down sharply from the 5.5 million rate in both September and August."

Elsewhere the production changes were mixed, with business equipment output down sharply but appliance output

production was down 0.6 percent, held back in part because of a reduction in coal output following the end of the brief rail strike.

Factory production in the previous month, September, was originally reported to be down 0.6 percent but was actually off 0.7 percent, the latest report said.

The Fed's industrial production index, at 136.3 percent of the 1967 average, was 11.4 percent under its level when the recession began in July 1981.

The accompanying index for the volatile category of materials

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