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Ex-sergeant was a spy, FBI claims

East bloc paid \$5 million
for secret NATO plans

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TAMPA — A former U.S. Army sergeant — who at one time lived in the Orlando area — received up to \$5 million from East bloc countries for secret NATO plans, an FBI investigator said Friday.

"It's one of the most serious breaches ever — it's unprecedented what went over to the other side," said Joe Navarro, who led the FBI's probe.

Roderick James Ramsay, 28, who was arrested Thursday night on a downtown street, appeared before a federal magistrate in Tampa on Friday. He was charged with conspiracy to gather or deliver defense information to aid a foreign government, the FBI said. The magistrate continued the hearing until Tuesday.

From last summer until about a month ago, Ramsay was a driver for Yellow Cab in Orlando, former co-workers said. He was described by one of those workers as "friendly and very intelligent."

Navarro told U.S. Magistrate Elizabeth Jenkins that Ramsay had a high IQ, spoke Japanese and German and "had the ability to recall minute details, facts and figures — some from documents he hadn't seen in five or six years."

That information included sensitive documents on the use of tactical nuclear weapons by U.S. forces and NATO allies, and plans for the defense of Central Europe, the Justice Department said. Ramsay also leaked technical manuals on military communications technology and material about the coordination of NATO forces.

The material was passed to Hungarian and Czechoslovakian intelligence agents, court papers show.

"From our investigation, we know it went to the Soviets," Navarro said. "I know of no other case where so much information was compromised at one time."

Although Ramsay told the FBI he received only \$20,000, agents estimate he was paid between \$2.2 million and \$5 million for his information, Navarro testified. But Ramsay somehow lost access to that money, he said, and wound up sleeping in his car.

Before joining the Army, Ramsay robbed a bank in Vermont in 1981 and tried to crack a hospital safe, Navarro said. The agent also said Ramsay told the FBI as recently as a month ago that he did not mind going to prison because he could get a good criminal education there.

Ramsay worked in West Germany from 1983 to 1985 directly under Clyde Lee Conrad, 43, a retired U.S. Army sergeant convicted of treason by a West German court and given a life sentence earlier this week, the FBI said. It said Ramsay's arrest stemmed from the investigation of Conrad.

FBI agents said the seven-year nationwide investigation into the alleged spy ring was continuing.

Ramsay faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment if convicted of espionage conspiracy.



Ramsay

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