

Two Britons Accused in Computer Smuggling Case

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LONDON, Dec. 12 (AP) — Two Britons were charged today with trying to smuggle United States-manufactured computers to the Soviet bloc in violation of Western bans on the export of certain high-technology items.

Customs agents in the English Channel port of Poole seized a container truck loaded with six computers as it was about to be put onto a ferry for France on Sunday. A customs official said the computers were worth an estimated \$750,000.

The defendants, Bryan Williamson, a 51-year-old company director, and Christopher Carrigan, 40, an engineer, were arraigned in Poole Magistrates'

Court on charges they violated the 1981 British Export of Goods Control Order. The order requires that the Department of Trade license shipments of computers to the Soviet Union.

The men, who were not asked to plead to the charges, had to surrender their passports. Each was held in lieu of bail equivalent to \$8,640 at least until Jan. 24.

Reported Banned in U.S.

The Daily Mail reported that Mr. Williamson, head of a company in Wimborne, near Poole, has been banned by the United States from handling sales of sensitive high-technology

items because of suspicions he was a conduit for illegal shipments to the Soviet Union.

The confiscation is the latest move in a crackdown by United States allies in Europe on the illegal flow of strategic information to the Soviet bloc, which, intelligence analysts say, is chipping away at the West's technological edge. There have been similar seizures in Sweden and West Germany recently.

A spokesman for the British Customs and Excise Department said export documents with the consignment showed the computers were destined for France. But the Press Association, Britain's domestic news agency,

quoted customs officials as having said the equipment's ultimate destination was believed to be Czechoslovakia.

The customs spokesman declined to say what kind of computer equipment was seized.

Richard Perle, President Reagan's special envoy who is coordinating the crackdown by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, said in a recent television interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation that the Soviet Union had matched Western breakthroughs like the B-1 bomber by stealing high-technology secrets.

The Institute for Strategic Studies, an authoritative research center in London, said in its 1983-84 "Military Balance" that Soviet acquisitions had made the West's technological superiority "much smaller than it was."