

Colby Tells Publishers That C.I.A. Is Jeopardized by Sensational Headlines

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NEW ORLEANS, April 7—

William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, said today that the Central Intelligence Agency was being jeopardized by sensational and unjustified headlines.

He told a group of American newspaper publishers that his agency and its service to the country were being endangered "by its status as the nation's No. 1 sensational lead" in newspaper articles.

In his view, he indicated, the C.I.A. is too often used to give sensation to the lead, or opening, of a news article even when the agency is not a major part of the article. Mr. Colby, who spoke at an Associated Press luncheon at the

annual convention of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, also answered questions.

Intelligence directors before Mr. Colby appeared rarely at public meetings and almost never submitted to questions on the record.

Since the recent published allegations of C.I.A. involvement in domestic operations in this country, however, Mr. Colby has appeared before a number of news-gathering organizations for discussions both on and off the record.

No Cases Discussed

Mr. Colby, in his warning on what he saw as American intelligence-gathering apparatus, declined to discuss any particular case. But he said that though a foreign country "which our C.I.A. was 'proud of our intelligence service must turn

the open society' . . . we also believe that this open society must be protected, and that intelligence, and even secret intelligence, must play a part in that protection."

Because the agency has become "the nation's No. 1 sensational lead," he said, other intelligence agencies are "questioning our ability to keep their work for us secret," and American business concerns that have helped the C.I.A. are afraid that their "businesses abroad [will be] destroyed by a revelation of their patriotic assistance to the C.I.A."

Foreign officials from friendly governments are also worried about this, he said. He said that the military attachés from a foreign country "which our intelligence service must turn

the risk of life and death and spend hundreds of millions of dollars" to obtain about his country."

"Sometimes the journalists assume the story can do no harm when, in reality, there are unrevealed facts about it which would change the journalists' mind," he said.

Protection of Sources

Mr. Colby, who appeared to be well received by the 1,300 publishers and their wives, said that he was not asking that "bad secrets" be suppressed, and I also believe that "non-secrets" should be exposed.

"But I do make a plea that 'good secrets' be respected," he added.

"I only ask," he said, "that

we Americans protect our nation's sources in the same way the journalist protects his."

In the question-and-answer period, Mr. Colby defined "good secrets" as, for instance, the names appearing in a book written about the C.I.A. by Philip F. B. Agee, a former agent. The book, "Inside the Company/C.I.A. Diary," has been published in England and can now be purchased in this country.

Mr. Colby denied in reply to a question that the C.I.A. had taken part in the overthrow of the Government of President Salvador Allende Gossens in Chile. At another session on the opening day of the publishers' convention, William E. Simon,

Secretary of the Treasury, was critical of some of the economic reporting in American newspapers.

He said, "Your reporters and editorial writers must necessarily jump from crisis to crisis, from one complex subject to the next with little time or space for deep analysis, and often with little prior knowledge of the subject."

He said that there had "been marked improvement in the past year" in the reporting of economic news, but still asserted that his "greatest concern about the press today is that they have failed to convey a better sense of perspective for the American people about the [economic] choices we face."