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In Search of Colby's Successor

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Wanted: A man of stature, poise, distinction, objectivity, experience in infighting in the jungle of Washington bureaucracy, to fill position of great responsibility. Salary: \$42,500 a year. While it has not gone so far as a want ad, the search is on for a successor to William E. Colby as director of the CIA.

A number of names are in the hopper, but the catch is finding the right man willing to take a post bound to be difficult and full of friction and animosity.

For the new man will have to carry out a restructuring of the intelligence agency, taking into account the amazing revelations coming from congressional committees poking into the vast internal darkness of an operation that ran wild.

One report is that the new man will not be picked until after the investigations are concluded. But that may be as long as a year hence and in the interval the CIA is plagued by doubts as to its mission and the nature of the eventual oversight to be imposed by Congress and the White House.

The new director will not come from within the agency. That much seems certain. He will be an outsider, presumably with experience in the overall function of intelligence, but with no commitments to the past.

This greatly complicates the search. One name that cropped up briefly was Elliot Richardson, currently ambassador to Great Britain. Richardson served in the Nixon administration as Under Secretary of State, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare and the Department of Defense before he became Attorney General. He resigned from the latter post after refusing to fire Archibald Cox on President Nixon's orders.

Richardson is said to have backed away from the CIA prospect as though he had been confronted with a summary request that he submit to trial by fire. He is reported harboring high political ambitions, although his base in his native Boston is eroded to virtual nonexistence.

John A. McCone, who came from the outside where he had had a successful career in business, is widely considered to have been the ablest director in the history of the agency. Serving from 1961 to 1965, he was the first to recognize the importance in aerial photographs of the missile in-

three down the line without the knowledge of the head of the agency.

Colby, who served the CIA for a considerable stretch in Vietnam as boss of a pacification program, has been asked several times about reports he will be replaced. Each time he replies by pointing to his commission which states that he serves at the pleasure of the President. His resignation will be forthcoming whenever the President requests it.

Both in Defense and State, the feeling is strong that the CIA cannot be restructured and restored to the primary function of intelligence gathering so long as Colby is the director.

The complaint is that he has talked too much and that in an apparent effort to save his own skin he has thrown off on his predecessors and officials down below the directorial level. This is the bitter feeling of many longtime CIA staffers who feel they have been needlessly thrown to the wolves by the man in the driver's seat.

In this interval between appearances before Senate and House committees, Colby is carrying on as though he expected to be in his job until the end of time.

However, the rate of inquiries continues high and applicants with highly specialized training are under consideration. The CIA, if one takes Colby's word, is alive and well across the Potomac.

installations in Cuba. This led to the confrontation with Moscow when President John F. Kennedy forced the Soviets to remove the weapons that had a potential of destruction with nuclear warheads of at least one third of the United States.

McCone is known to have strong feelings about the responsibility of the director and his relationship with his subordinates. It is intolerable that free-wheeling operations should go on at the order of those two or