

Colby on Ex-Agent: 'Wouldn't Say He Made Up Any of This'

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By Albert B. Crenshaw
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former CIA director William Colby yesterday conceded that charges by a former Central Intelligence official that the CIA ran a "covert war" in Angola and then lied to keep it secret are generally correct.

"I wouldn't say he made up any of this," Colby said of the charges by John Stockwell, a 12-year CIA veteran. However, Colby added, "I think he may characterize things differently. And there are two ways of characterizing the same event . . . many times."

Colby denied "that I misled Congress when I described the basic thrust of our program in Angola," as Stockwell has also charged. In fact, he indicated at another point in the program, he was fired by President Ford, because "I was too responsive to Congress."

Both Stockwell's assertions and Colby's response came on the television program "60 Minutes" (CBS, WTOP). The two were interviewed separately, Colby twice. Stockwell's comments and some of Colby's

from his first interview were broadcast last week. The remainder of the first Colby interview plus the second, in which he responded directly to Stockwell, was broadcast last night.

In addition, both men have written books about their experiences at the CIA.

Stockwell, who was once chief of the agency's task force on Angola, had charged that "blundering stupidity" paved the way for massive Soviet and Cuban intervention in the 1975 Angolan civil war. He also accused the president of Zaire, Mobutu Sess Seko, of stealing \$1.4 million intended for U.S. allies in Angola, and he detailed CIA plots to plant call girls with communist officials in order to gain information.

He said he left the agency after becoming disillusioned with its tactics, and he said he felt freed from his oath of secrecy because the CIA did not act the way he was told it would when he joined.

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"Well, that's a great rationalization," Colby said, "because I'm sure . . . that he knew roughly what kind of organization he was joining. And if he says that suddenly it doesn't turn out to be the Boy Scouts, I think he was asking a little much. And he's not relieved of that obligation" to secrecy.

Colby said he would favor a "law which punished ex-employees or employees for revealing real secrets."

He said he would want only a "very limited law which only applied to CIA employees who undertake the obligation to keep the secret." And he said he would require that an "impartial judge" review the material "to make sure it's real secret and not a cover-up of some wrongdoing."

Colby contended that the "climate of sensation, hysteria" generated by books such as those of Stockwell and Frank Snepp, another former CIA agent whose book criticizes the agency's role in the fall of Saigon, "has convinced a lot of people around the world that we can't keep secrets."

He said that for fear of exposure, foreign intelligence services have reduced the amount of information they are willing to give the CIA, and that people who needed U.S. aid "have not dared to take our help."

"I believe that you can't run an army if every lieutenant decides which order to follow," Colby said. "You can't run an intelligence service if every junior officer decides which secret to keep."

Colby was appointed director of the agency in 1973 by President Nixon and was succeeded by Ford's appointee, George Bush, in 1976. He is now practicing law in Washington.

He defended his testimony before congressional committees investigating intelligence agency abuses, saying he laid out CIA misdeeds "to get rid of them and to demonstrate that CIA, itself, had corrected those a year and a half before."

He said that "There were a number of [President Ford's] advisers who felt I was responding too willingly to Congress," and he said that Vice President Rockefeller was also critical of him.

The testimony was necessary, though, he said, "Because the Congress was on a rampage of learning what was going on in government . . . And they would have torn us apart if I had tried to stop them."

Ultimately, Colby said, "we did save the important secrets . . . We protected what you journalists like to protect, your sources. But we did not protect the activities of the agency generally, and I think that was the necessary trade-off."