CIA Kept Soviet Mail From U.S.

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More than 100 pieces of mail sent in 1973 from the Soviet Union to addresses in the United States were intercepted and retained by the Central Intelligence Agency until this week, the CIA has told the Postal Service.

CIA Director William E. Colby said in a letter to Postmaster General Benjamin F. Bailar that the mail [illegible] cards and [illegible] been located [illegible] location [illegible]

Colby [illegible] forwar[illegible] tended [illegible] CIA's [illegible]

While the CIA has previously admitted opening and copying first-class mail without a required search warrant, yesterday's disclosure by Bailar was the first indication that the CIA had kept mail from its intended recipients.

In a statement, Bailar said he notified the Justice Department that the mail had been detained, and it served Bailar with a search warrant for the mail.

Bailar [illegible] Department [illegible] "pending [illegible] against [illegible] opening [illegible]

The [illegible] reported [illegible] CIA had [illegible] the United States [illegible] Communist [illegible] ularly the Soviet Union [illegible] 20 years [illegible]

In its [illegible] the intercept [illegible] York [illegible] 2.3 million [illegible] and from [illegible] and opened [illegible] contents of [illegible] the report said.

The program was stopped by William J. Cotter, the chief postal inspector, who knew of the interceptions because he had been a CIA agent.

Explaining the discovery of the 110 opened pieces of mail, Colby told Bailar in a letter that the mail had been found "on a shelf in a securely vaulted area in office space assigned to a unit of the CIA."

Colby said the mail was with a dispatch from a CIA installation in Latin America. Detailing the mail's [illegible] path, Colby said it had been given to the CIA's Latin American installation.

That citizen had received it from another resident of the

See MAIL, A17, [illegible]

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MAIL, From A1

area who had gotten it "in a single package which appeared [illegible] have been mailed to him by a New York firm."

Although Colby said the firm was not connected with mail interceptions, he did not reveal the identity of the company nor of others involved in retrieving the mail.

In his reply to Colby, Bailar said [illegible] in your letter stand to clear violation of the sanctity of the mails and threaten to shake public confidence in the integrity of the mail."

Bailar asked that the CIA turn over any other mail it might have detained.