

Coordinating Staff For Intelligence Agencies Expands

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The government's newest coordinating bureaucracy, the intelligence community staff, has grown so big this past year that it is now set to take over its own downtown Washington office building just one block from the White House.

The staff provides support to the CIA director in his role as manager of all intelligence agencies. Since last February, when President Ford increased the CIA director's control over policy, priorities and budgets for the government's entire intelligence effort, the size of the community staff has shot up.

When the CIA director acted as intelligence coordinator but with little real power, the staff was fewer than 100. After Ford named Bush manager of all agencies in February, 1976, the staff grew to 163.

Next year, according to the 1978 Ford budget, the staff will grow again—this time to 222 people and an annual budget of \$10.5 million.

Ford has also requested supplemental 1977 funds for the staff operation so it can take over the building at 1724 F St. NW. that formerly housed the Selected Service System. A spokesman for the Office of Management and Budget said recently the move is scheduled for March.

During last year's consideration of the CIA budget, the House Appropriations Committee approved an amendment that required the budget of the newly empowered intelligence community staff to be made public. It was a compromise move to give some satisfaction to House members who had wanted the entire CIA budget disclosed.

CIA Director Bush opposed making even the community staff funding public and rallied support to his position when the House amendment was taken up by the Senate.

The Senate Appropriations Committee and the full Senate went along with Bush.

In the House-Senate conference, however, the House amendment prevailed. The argument at the time was that the community staff was part of the new intelligence oversight pack-

age and therefore its size and cost should be known to the public.

As the size and power of the community grew last year, the Pentagon—which has the largest intelligence budget—became worried that CIA was exercising too much control over the operation. There were too few military men on the staff from the Defense Department's point of view and the staff was housed at CIA's headquarters in Langley.

The staff's expected March move out of CIA headquarters, according to informed sources both in the executive branch and Congress, came both because of its growth and the criticism of the Pentagon that the staff was a captive of CIA.

Next year, according to the 1978 budget document, the military presence on the staff will increase from two to 15.

Although the intelligence community staff is now a published item in the President's budget, a spokesman for the Senate Intelligence Committee said recently that hearings on the staff—like the rest of the still-secret intelligence budget authorization—would be in secret session.

"We will try to make public as much as we can," the spokesman said.