

CIA Director Says President Wouldn't

By Warren Brown

Washington Post Staff Writer

Central Intelligence Agency Director Stansfield Turner said yesterday that President Carter would not object to making public the overall cost of U.S. intelligence operations.

Turner made the statement in an appearance before the Senate Intelligence Committee, which is trying to determine if any part of the nation's intelligence budget should be made public.

Héretofore, U.S. intelligence costs have been buried in other budgets—especially that of the Department of Defense.

But Turner said yesterday that the

administration, in the spirit of openness, "would not object to a single, inclusive budget figures being released to the public subject to several extremely important qualifications."

Those qualifications would prohibit the release of additional figures and comments from intelligence officials "on the composition or character of the intelligence budget," Turner said.

"It is here that, regrettably, we must draw the line between openness and necessary secrecy," Turner said. He said further disclosure "would jeopardize the interest of our country more than the additional information would benefit it."

Unofficial estimates of total U.S. intelligence spending range from \$4 billion to \$7 billion. For the CIA, operating costs unofficially have been put at \$750 million. The New York Times reported April 1 that, according to sources, the Carter administration has requested \$6.2 billion for the nation's intelligence operations in the budget for fiscal year 1978.

None of those figures was confirmed in yesterday's hearing.

In fact, there seemed to be a reluctance on the part of some committee members to try Carter's willingness to allow publication of the overall intelligence budget—which was approved by the intelligence committee's budget authorization subcommittee during 40 hours of closed-door meetings over the past several weeks.

Turner, for example, said the administration believes that publicizing the aggregate intelligence community

budget would help to restore public confidence in the intelligence agencies. But Sen. William D. Hathaway (D-Maine), who chaired yesterday's hearing, disagreed.

"It seems to me that the credibility of the intelligence community—if it's been hurt at all [by recent scandals]—has been hurt because of covert operations and not because of how much money you spend."

Hathaway told Turner, "It may hurt your credibility to release [overall] figures because they may raise other questions. . . I think that the public has been adequately protected [through the establishment of congressional oversight committees]. So why run the risk of releasing that one figure?"

Another committee member, Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.), added, "My general reading of my constituents tells me that they want a first-class intelligence community. They don't want a lot of guilt-ridden people run-

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ning around offering budget figures [in expiation] for whatever sins they may have committed in the past."

The debate over the intelligence budget was interrupted by Turner's emotional explanation of why he fired two CIA agents. The unidentified employees had provided unauthorized assistance to former CIA officials allegedly involved in selling explosive devices and other materials overseas.

Turner said he spent sleepless nights before deciding on the dismissals. The employees had done nothing illegal, but had displayed bad judgment and a lack of professionalism, Turner said.

"Each was entrapped by the same mechanism," said the CIA director. "That mechanism was trying to help a friend.

"When I realized that these two officers had merged their unofficial with their official duties . . . I found that I could no longer go to sleep at

night and feel that the intelligence agency was under complete control. Therefore, I felt it necessary not to have these individuals in the community," he said.

Turner said the firings were meant to set an example. To wit: "While loyalty to friends is an admirable trait, they must put loyalty to the agency and to the country first."

On the budget disclosure, Turner said, "Some of the public think we spend X-billion a year on intelligence when, in fact, we spend one-tenth of X-billion . . . Putting it (the intelligence budget) in proportion for them may be of some help."

Former CIA Director William E. Colby disagreed.

"It would be very unwise for our nation to be the first in the world to reveal its intelligence budget," he told the panel.

Colby, who headed the agency from 1973 to 1976, said that if the committee votes to make the overall intelli-

gence budget figure available, "I confidently predict that you will be inundated by a series of questions in the coming years as to what the figure includes and what it excludes. Why does it go up? Why does it go down? Is it worth it? How does it work? And I believe that we will in very short time be losing much of the value of the sums appropriated for these intelligence activities."

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), who chaired the original Senate investigation of the nation's intelligence agencies from January, 1975, to May, 1976, and Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) rejected the view that public disclosure of intelligence budgets would hurt the national interest.

Church said the aggregate figure for intelligence-gathering operations and the individual totals for the various agencies "would allow the Congress and the people to begin to make the hard trade-offs between the different items in the federal budget."