

William E. Colby

# 'Professional's Professional'

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By Laurence Stern  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
"Call Helms and tell him to give Colby to Komer."  
London Johnson barked at his national security adviser, Walt W. Rostow, one day in the fall of 1967.

The Colby to whom the late President referred was William E. Colby, the professional professional Colby who was nominated by President Nixon yesterday as new director of the Central Intelligence Agency to replace short-tenure James H. Schlesinger.

The peremptory call from President Johnson to Rostow was made in the midst of a conversation between the President and his chief pacification adviser in South Vietnam, Robert W. Komer. "What do you need," the President insistently asked Komer.

"I want a guy I can train as a successor," Komer responded. "I've got my eye on Bill Colby at the CIA."  
Former CIA Director Rich and Mr. Helms exploded when he learned of the unorthodox manner by which Komer had instigated the Presidential demand for Colby's services. Komer recalled in an interview yesterday.

"I felt there was a war on afoot something had to be done," he said. "Dick came out of town once he got it off

his chest. In fact he told me, 'You know, I would have given you Colby if I had time.'"

"The professional's professional" was one admiring characterization of Colby.

"The complete" meant Colby was the more qualified description of an ex-foreign service officer who knew Colby during his last years of service in the Vietnam war. "He has lived his whole life in the clandestine service, and he came up through the ranks."

Stewart Alsop once wrote of the dichotomy within the Central Intelligence Agency as between the Hold Easters and the Proud Protectors. The first group was comprised of tweedy Crotonians with some money, social position and a touch of Anglophilia. They reigned in the pre-Bay of Pigs era.

In the second category were the professional intelligence men—specialists and technicians—who made their way on merit alone upward through the anonymous bureaucracy at Langley.

William E. Colby represents the triumph of the Professional Professional. He is a man of medium height and unassuming dress. His face wears a little taller he would look like a third

Bundy brother's counterpart. A former student of Dwight D. Eisenhower's.

Most of his professional life has been spent on the dark side of the intelligence world, the large group of plans, known in the highest echelons as the "Special Activities" of the Department of Defense.

He was first in the field in 1946, in the office of an Army officer. He was then in the office of a Marine and during World War II worked in the Office of the Chief of Staff, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the State Department. He was the most estimable of credentials for a congressman who would make his career in the intelligence service.

Colby parachuted behind Nazi lines in France to work with the maquis and into northern Norway to blow up railway lines supplying German reinforcements.

But the centerpiece of his career was Vietnam, where he arrived in 1959 as "first secretary"—so described yesterday by a CIA spokesman—of the American embassy. Actually, he was well known in Saigon those days.

Colby was the CIA's station chief in South Vietnam and it was during this period that his long association with the war was first forged. In 1962 he became chief of the Far East Division of the CIA's Directorate of Plans in Washington. The agency's role in the Indochina section

that was paramount at the time, several years before the big D.S. military build-up.

The CIA's backed an army of men in the mountains of Laos, the Vietnamese Communist forces in Laos April 1960.

When the president of the CIA was asked about the program, he said, "I don't know what you mean. I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know what you're talking about."

Colby was the working overseer of the Proud Protector's in charge of developing these programs and making sure that they worked. Whatever the full name of Colby's intelligence background, he has been in the middle of controversy.

The CIA's board of directors and the other programs, as reported in the Washington Post, have been in the middle of controversy.

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He had during those three years alone in Komer's absence with in Saigon and traveled out to the countryside almost every weekend occasionally taking a long sabbatical for professional STPs with him. On occasions he would come back to Washington to see the on-the-spot successes of the programs for which he had been an architect and chief enforcer of the effort.

Colby's last stint in Vietnam ended in June, 1971, when he returned to Washington and disappeared into the CIA's sprawling home office of Langley, where he showed into administrative work as a deputy secretary for the old intelligence section.

But Komer was instructed by Schlesinger to lead the Directorate of Plans, where he had spent his life under various kinds of appointment by the CIA.

When he was named to the job, Komer said, "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know what you're talking about."