

SFChronicle Warning by CIA's Colby on Naming of Assassin Plotters

Washington

Central Intelligence Agency Director William Colby made an unusual public appeal yesterday against the Senate Intelligence Committee's release of the names of 12 intelligence officials involved in alleged assassination schemes aimed at foreign leaders.

He warned, in a hastily called press conference at CIA headquarters, that the naming of the CIA operatives as well as American citizens and foreigners who

worked with the agency could subject them to "extra-legal retaliation" by individuals and "unstable or extremist groups."

But Committee Chairman Frank Church (Dem-Idaho) rejected Colby's plea.

"The committee made its decision with great care and after much deliberation and many conferences with the executive branch . . ." he said.

"To discharge our responsibility . . ."
Back Page Col. 5

From Page 1

ity to the public, many names had to be included of those that were inseparably involved . . . in assassination plots and assassination attempts."

He accused Colby of an "11th-hour attempt to interfere with the publication of the committee's report," which is to be published today.

Church said the committee considered the arguments and in "those cases where we believed the argument was legitimate . . . the names were deleted from the report."

As Church was speaking, the White House was circulating a briefing paper among Republican senators to give them reasons for supporting Colby's appeal.

One White House source said administration lobbyists are attempting to persuade the senators to demand a chance to read the entire report before its release, a step that would delay its publication.

The Senate intelligence panel has already deleted 20 of the 32 names the CIA asked it to eliminate from its public report.

In past years, CIA directors were rarely seen in public, let alone at press conferences. The only other formal press conference in the agency's history, according to CIA spokesmen, was last September 12 during the height of the agency's confrontation with the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

Colby, when asked why he was resorting to the extraordinary measure of holding a press conference, said he wanted to make clear publicly that he felt it was "wrong" to release the names.

He said that he and other top-ranking officials of the agency had already been subjected to crank calls and threats.

Colby said his concern extends to middle level and senior officials of the agency whose names figure in the report. They are people, he said, who carried out orders that general public attitudes "thought appropriate at the time."

"Exposing our people to hostile retaliation is not in the tradition of our country," said Colby.

Testimony given to the Senate committee, he went on, was provided with the expectation that neither it nor the identity of the CIA witnesses would be made public.

Colby noted that the committee had agreed under the pressure of an appellate court battle to delete the name of one CIA official who had challenged the committee's decision to name him. That official, he said, was not among the 12 remaining intelligence officers whose cases still concern him.

Informed sources said that this official was Sidney Gottlieb, retired head of the CIA's technical services division.

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