

Leaks of Secrets

CIA Chief Rips Into Congress

Washington

Outgoing CIA Director William E. Colby called yesterday for sharp restrictions on the number of legislators with access to intelligence secrets. He made his strongest criticism of Congress.

"The fewer members ... the better," Colby told the Senate Government Operations Committee in urging creation of a single committee to oversee covert operations, with criminal penalties for staff members who reveal secrets.

"The system won't work," Colby said of the present procedure by which eight congressional committees are briefed on covert operations.

"Every one of the new projects that were subjected to this process has leaked into the public domain," he added, in apparent reference to recent news report about CIA operations in Angola and Italy.

"I believe it is essential to repeal that procedure and replace it by another which will include provisions for adequate secrecy," Colby said. "The sooner the better," he added later in response to a question.

A second witness, former national security adviser McGeorge Bundy, said it is wrong to attribute the disclosure of the Angolan operation to the large number of committees privy to CIA secrets. The real cause, Bundy said, "is the breakdown of the broad political consensus which made it possible ten or 15 years ago for the CIA to conduct such large operations in the face of widespread knowledge of their existence without any admission or explanation from the U.S. government."

Bundy, who served under President Kennedy, gave as an example U.S. covert operations against Cuba during the early 1960s. "The existence of this effort was widely known and ... in the climate of the time the major media and the Congress made no effort whatever to expose it in detail."

Bundy disagreed with Colby on the subject of making the CIA budget public. Colby has consistently opposed any revelation of CIA spending. Bundy maintained that U.S. intelligence spending is "almost surely better known to our adversaries than to us," and he urged the disclosure of over-all spending figures.

In criticizing Congress for disclosing intelligence secrets, Colby flatly denied a suggestion made recently by Senator Clifford Case

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(Rep-N.J.) that the leaks were coming from the CIA in an effort to discredit the congressional committees.

Colby, who is expected to be replaced by former GOP chairman George Bush after a Senate confirmation vote scheduled for next week, seemed to reserve his harshest criticism for the House.

In an obvious reference to the House intelligence committee, Colby labeled as "absurd" a "situation in which a committee agrees not to release individual reports of secret activities but then proposes to publish them in its final report."

Making what is expected to be his last appearance on Capitol Hill as CIA director, Colby also complained about members of Congress who are told about covert operations and then claim "that they never heard of them when they came to public attention."

He cited an unnamed chairman

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of one of the CIA supervisory committees who "once indicated on the floor of the Senate that he had no inkling of one of our operations, although he had approved the specific appropriations necessary to continue it."

Colby, who was highly praised by members of the government operations committee for his serv-

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ice as director, rejected the notion of giving a new committee advance notice before any covert operation is undertaken.

According to Colby, advance notification would "conflict with the President's constitutional rights, would be totally impractical during times of congressional recess when crises can arise and would add nothing to the ability of the Congress to express its views about any of our activities."

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