

CIA Has Only One Tape Bearing on Watergate

Washington

CIA director William E. Colby said last night that the CIA can find only one tape recording bearing on the Watergate affair and that it has destroyed all its other tapes from that period.

In a telephone interview, Colby said, "Senator (Howard) Baker asked us if there were any of other tapes that bore on the subject. And we don't have any other on this subject at the moment. We had periodic destruction of our tapes."

Baker, the Tennessee Republican who is vice chairman of the Senate Watergate Committee, confirmed in another telephone interview he had requested any CIA tapes bearing on the Watergate affair.

He declined to say what he was seeking specifically, but said that the CIA had been cooperating fully and that he expects to get something but did not know how much.

Baker confirmed that he

had talked with Colby about the matter over the weekend.

Colby said that the one tape the agency has that fits Baker's request is of a conversation on June 22, 1971, between E. Howard Hunt, of the White House special investigations — or plumbers — unit, and Marine General Robert E. Cushman, then deputy director of the CIA.

The transcript of that tape has been entered into the record of the Senate Watergate committee and Colby said it also had been supplied to the Watergate special prosecutor's office and several other congressional committees.

He said the agency will supply Baker with the tape itself.

"Anything we own he can have," Colby said.

But, Colby said, "Over the last 15 years, we have made tapes but periodically they were torn up the way you

tear up old notes or old checks after income tax time. And we have not made any tapes in the past year."

He said the Cushman-Hunt tape, made by Cushman in his own office, "survived normal procedures of destruction because it was put in a separate drawer somehow."

In the tape transcript, Hunt asked Cushman to supply him two things: "flash alias documentation ... and some degree of physical disguise for a one-time op-in and out."

The request was made shortly before the plumbers supervised a break-in at the California offices of the psychiatrist of Daniel Ellsberg, the man who leaked the Pentagon Papers to the news media.

CBS News, meanwhile, reported that the CIA made the recordings secretly and that some of them may have included conversations with the President.

CBS said the tapes apparently were being sought to throw light on the CIA's role in the break-in at the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist and other Watergate-related matters.

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