

# Professional's Professional

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By Lawrence Stern  
Washington Post Staff Writer

"Call Helms and tell him to give Colby to Kommer. Lyndon Johnson barked at his national security adviser, Walt W. Rostow, one day in the fall of 1967.

The Colby for whom the late President referred was William F. Colby, professional's professional, Colby, who was described by President Nixon as "a man who has done more for the country than any other man in the world."

The name Colby can mean President Johnson's few was in the name of a man who had been the president and his chief pacifist, the adviser to South Vietnam, Kommer. What do you need? The President has recently asked Kommer.

"I want a man who can be as a successor," Kommer responded. "I've got my eye on Bill Colby at the CIA." Former CIA Director and M. Helms said he had when he heard of the name. Kommer had instructed the Presidential staff to call Colby's services. Kommer called in an afternoon yesterday.

his chest. In fact he told me: "You know I would have given you Colby if I had to."

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

"The complete apparatus" was the more qualified description of an ex-foreign service officer who knew Colby during his long years of service in the Army.

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Bundy brother's comment: "You know I would have given you Colby if I had to."

Most of his professional life has been spent on the right side of the intelligence world—the Directorate of Plans known in the denigrative literature as "The Department of Dirty Tricks."

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that was paramount at the time several years before the big U.S. military buildup.

The CIA organized an army of Meo mercenaries to battle the Vietnamese Communists in Laos. And in Vietnam the precursors of what was to be called the "pacification" program were being set into motion—the CT (counter-terror) units, the Revolutionary Development cadre, the Provincial Reconnaissance Units and then the controversial Phoenix Program—all under CIA management.

Colby was the working overseer, the Prudent Professional, in charge of developing these programs and making sure that they worked. Whatever the failure or success of Colby's intelligence handiwork may have been, they produced controversy.

The critics charged that Phoenix and the other programs accomplished little else than visiting fortune and assassination on innocent while antagonizing large segments of the Vietnamese population. The parents claimed success, and buttressed their statements with awesome statistics which they had obtained to computer printouts and passed on to Washington.

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He lived during those three years alone in Kommer's spacious villa in Saigon and traveled out to the countryside almost every weekend, occasionally taking newspapermen or congressional VIPs with him. On occasions he would come back to Washington to testify on the successes of the programs for which he had been an architect and chief enforcement officer.

Colby's final stint in Vietnam ended in June, 1971, when he returned to Washington and disappeared into the CIA's sprawling home office at Langley, where he plunged into administrative work, a curiously sedentary role for the old intelligence warrior.

Last March he was named by Schlesinger to head the Directorate of Plans, where he had spent his life under various covers and often out in the cold.

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