

CIA: Secrets Need Added Protection

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The director of the CIA, William E. Colby, says stronger protection is needed to safeguard intelligence secrets. In an interview published yesterday in U.S. News & World Report, Colby said he has recommended legislation to help protect such information.

"There are criminal penalties for people who reveal income tax returns or census returns or even cotton statistics. But there are no similar penalties for persons who reveal the name of an intelligence officer or agent or an intelligence secret, unless they give it to a foreigner or intend to injure the United States," he said.

"I think it's just plain wrong for us not to protect our secrets better."

Colby said recent publicity about secret CIA operations has raised questions among foreign allies about "the degree to which we can keep secrets."

The CIA, he said, is as open as possible, briefing newsmen and providing public information and assessments whenever it is able. "I think America gains a great deal of strength from this, even though it's a big change from traditional intelligence secrecy," Colby said.

Questioned about Watergate, he said the CIA made two errors—providing paraphernalia for E. Howard Hunt and releasing the psychological profile of Daniel Ellsberg. But he said steps have been taken to prevent future misuse of the CIA, with employees instructed to report such attempts directly to him.

"If anybody really tried to misuse the CIA in the future, he said, "I think the organization would explode from inside. It really would. And that's good, because it's the best protection we have against this kind of problem."