

Angleton's Resignation in Works 6 Months

By Austin Scott

Washington Post Staff Writer

CIA Director William Colby decided six months ago to ask for "the involuntary resignation" of the CIA's counter-intelligence chief, James J. Angleton, but put off telling Angleton until December, according to a secret document obtained yesterday.

The document, a recollection of what four top CIA officials, including Colby, told Senate Armed Services Committee staff members in a Jan. 8 meeting, does not explain what information prompted Colby to want Angleton out, or why he delayed asking him to leave.

Colby was not available for comment.

Angleton resigned Dec. 24, two days after The New York Times charged that the CIA had illegally spied on as many as 10,000 Americans.

On Dec. 25 Angleton said it this way, "I was asked by higher authorities."

The document "represents coordinated recall" of conversations between three Senate staff members and Colby, William Nelson, the CIA's deputy director for operations, general counsel John Warner and legislative counsel George Cary.

"Mr. Colby stated that as early as six months ago he had determined to ask for the involuntary retirement of James Angleton, who has served as head of the

counter-intelligence staff for some 20 years," the document notes. It continues:

"The director delayed until the next 'cost of living' increase for retirees was determined. In December, he told Angleton that several responsibilities, to include the Israeli operations, were being removed from his jurisdiction and that he could retire before the end of the year or remain active and work on a doctrinal concept of counter-intelligence as a result of his many years of experience."

Reached at his home by telephone, Angleton repeatedly said "no comment" to questions about whether several responsibilities were removed from his jurisdic-

tion, and whether he was given a choice of retiring or remaining active.

"Mr. Angleton chose to retire," the document continues. "Messrs. Rocca and Miller were told by Mr. Nelson that they would not be considered as a replacement for the top spot, but were welcome to remain with the agency. They chose to retire."

The resignations of Raymond Rocca, 57, Angleton's deputy, and Newton S. Miller, 48, chief of operations, were made public Dec. 29, along with that of executive officer William J. Hood, 54.

Their resignations removed the entire top command of the CIA's counter-intelligence division.