

# The secret plot to dump CIA's talkative chief

By Thomas B. Ross  
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WASHINGTON — A clandestine operation, worthy of a spy novel, is under way here to get rid of CIA director William Colby before he talks too much more about the dirty tricks of his agency and other high-level government officials.

Last Tuesday, Helen Thomas, White House correspondent of United Press International, reported that President Ford and Secretary of State Kissinger wanted former Treasury Secretary George Shultz to replace Colby as head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The story did not say where the information came from; but in the process of checking it, it was learned that the report was being put out by "sources close to Kissinger."

In fact, Shultz was not being considered for the CIA job, but already had been offered the chairmanship of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board under a beefed-up charter that would make him the czar of all U.S. intelligence.

And Shultz already has turned the job down in favor of remaining as head of the Bechtel Corp. in San Francisco.

But the effect of the original report was to undermine Colby and to push him further along the road to resignation. Ford evidently had planned to retain Colby for a decent interval after his forthcoming reorganization of the intelligence apparatus.

"I think it would be a disservice to the country and Bill (Colby)," a key White House official said, "to have it thought that the only problem we have in the intelligence field can be solved by the appointment of a new director."

But the official conceded that Colby probably would be replaced "at some future date by a person of some command and stature."

Other officials of command and stature clearly would like the date to be soon. Colby has been sharply criticized privately by Kissinger and Vice President Rockefeller for opening a Pandora's Box in testifying so candidly about the CIA's misdeeds.

In their view, the time has long since passed when the CIA should have reverted to its traditional policy of keeping Congress and the public in the dark about its secret operations. With each new disclosure more and more officials, past and present, dead and alive, become tainted by the CIA scandal.

For the traditionalists, the model of proper behavior is Colby's predecessor, Richard Helms, now ambassador to Iran. He managed to disarm Congress with a broad smile, a few spy stories, and much circumlocution.

Helms is now under Justice Department scrutiny for possible perjury in testimony about the CIA's role in Chile and in domestic operations. Similarly, Kissinger is under persistent pressure for alleged perjury in testimony about his role in a series of wiretaps in 1969.

Helms has heightened the

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anxiety of his former colleagues here by letting it be known that he may implicate those who do not stand up for him.

"I'm going to keep very quiet," he told his friend and ex-CIA associate, columnist Tom Braden. "But if it looks as though it's all going to be my fault, I shall have a great deal to say."

Each day that Colby stays on the job is another day of risk that he will reveal yet another controversial operation that took place under Helms' tenure. And each revelation risks disclosure by Helms of those who approved or told him to do it.

Rockefeller, Kissinger's original patron, has declared publicly that he believes the revelations and investigations have gone far enough. Kissinger, who controlled the CIA's operation through the supersecret 40 Committee throughout both Helms' and Colby's directorship, has made it clear in private that he agrees.