

COLBY ASKS PANEL TO DROP 12 NAMES FROM PLOT REPORT

Says He Fears Retaliation —Data on Assassinations May Be Released Today

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19—William E. Colby, the Director of Central Intelligence, appealed today to a Senate committee not to make public the names of 12 individuals, some of them agency officials, who were allegedly involved in C.I.A. plots against the lives of foreign heads of state.

In a rare news conference at the Central Intelligence Agency's suburban Virginia headquarters, Mr. Colby said that he feared that the individuals, if named in a committee report expected to be released tomorrow, might be subject to retaliation from "unstable and extremist groups."

He said that while he opposed "in principle" publication of the report on C.I.A. assassination plots, which must be approved by the full Senate in order to be released, his immediate concern was to protect "the safety and livelihoods of the individuals involved" in those matters and also "the future of American intelligence."

An All-Out Effort

Mr. Colby's unusual appeal, which seemed to have been addressed as much to the full Senate as to the 11 members of the Select Committee on Intelligence, which has voted unanimously to approve the report's release, marked an all-out effort by the Ford Administration to block disclosure of the document on the Senate floor.

The Senate is scheduled to begin a closed debate at 9 A.M. tomorrow on whether to approve or forbid the release of the assassination report, a document of nearly 400 pages that is based on a five-month investigation by the select committee.

Senator Frank Church, the committee's chairman, said that his panel had considered carefully the C.I.A.'s arguments for deleting the names of individuals included in its report and had done so where it believed that was warranted.

"In the end," said Mr. Church, an Idaho Democrat, "the committee decided which names must be included," and he added, "We intend to proceed with the report."

According to Mr. Colby, the C.I.A. provided the Church

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committee with about 30 names of agency employes and American and foreign collaborators in connection with its inquiry into the assassination plots, because it believed those names were "important to an understanding of the matter" by the committee.

But, he said, the committee had agreed to the agency's request to remove the names from the final version of its report in only "18 or 20" of the cases.

It was not a question, Mr. Colby added, of whether the assassination attempts were "good or bad," and he said that Mr. Ford's expressed disapproval of such activities "is shared by many of us."

"The real question," he continued, "is whether we will impose an extra legal retaliation upon people who, at one time, did what the general consensus of people and the command structure around them thought was appropriate at the time."

At a news conference called after Mr. Colby's, Senator Church defended his intention to seek the release of the document with a reference to a decision by a United States district judge here earlier this week not to order the deletion of one such name.

The judge, Gerhard A. Gesell, ruled that while the identification of a man described only as a retired C.I.A. official might endanger his life, he was com-



Associated Press
William E. Colby, C.I.A. head, talking to reporters.

pelled to deny the former official's request for anonymity because the "public interest" in the report's contents "greatly outweighs the right to privacy of an individual."

Panel Excises Name

The Senate committee agreed yesterday, however, to excise the name of the retired official, who is understood to be Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, the former head of the agency's technical services division, whose name was reported prominently earlier this year after he was questioned in closed session by the committee about other matters.

Mr. Colby, without naming Dr. Gottlieb, acknowledged today that some of the 12 names remaining in the Senate report, and possibly some of those deleted at the agency's request, had been mentioned in news accounts of the Senate committee's investigation.

But, he said, there is "a vast difference in my mind between their appearance in press stor-

ies and their official confirmation in a committee report." He also expressed concern that such confirmation might bring the individuals harm from unnamed groups, "either domestic or foreign, who might feel called upon to take some such action against these people."

The C.I.A. director said that if neither the select committee nor the Senate acceded to his wishes to preserve their anonymity, the C.I.A. would provide the named individuals with what "limited protection we can give in this country."

Concern Expressed

Mr. Colby said that he had expressed his concern in letters to Senator Church and other members of Congress, and that President Ford had written to Mr. Church last month with a request to keep the assassination report secret on the ground that its publication would "result in serious harm to the national interest."

The Senate panel voted unanimously to reject Mr. Ford's request, and Mr. Church said at the time that his committee had undertaken to investigate the charges of C.I.A. involvement in assassination plot at the "urgings" of the President himself.

The Senate committee's inquiry was founded on information gathered by a Presidential commission on C.I.A. activities set up by Mr. Ford last January. As far as is known, no foreign leaders were killed in C.I.A.-inspired plots, which were directed primarily against Prime Minister Fidel Castro of Cuba.

A White House official said today that summaries of Mr. Ford's arguments against the release of the report had been delivered to key Senators.