



RICHARD S. WELCH
CIA agent murdered in Greece

CIA Angry Over Death Of Its Agent

Washington

Outgoing CIA Director William E. Colby yesterday called an intelligence agent murdered in Athens "a dedicated American," and criticized as "paranoiac" those who revealed his identity.

Colby, a veteran intelligence officer who will relinquish his post next month, released an unusual statement in response to one from the "fifth estate" publication "counterspy" which recently identified Richard S. Welch as a CIA station chief.

Welch, officially listed as a diplomat with the U.S. embassy, was shot to death in Athens Tuesday.

In the past, the CIA has never said who works or has worked for it in covert operations, but Colby's comment confirmed that Welch did.

The editors of Counterspy, which began three years ago in Washington as an anti-Vietnam war publication and characterizes itself as the "fifth estate," said in a statement they had identified Welch as a CIA station chief in Lima, Peru, but "his subsequent move to Greece was unknown to us and we have had no contact

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with the Greek newspaper that identified him."

"Mr. Welch died as a direct result of the worldwide hostility that the CIA has helped generate against the United States," Counterspy said. "As a CIA Agent he knew that his role in coordinating CIA operations, be they in Peru or Greece, could some day lead to his death. It is a fact of life in such organizations.

"If anyone is to blame for Mr. Welch's death, it is the CIA that sent him there to spy and perhaps even to intervene in the affairs of the Greek government."

The editors said more such incidents may occur" if CIA continued to intervene in affairs of other countries."

Colby responded:

"The so-called Counterspy of the fifth estate, without even an expression of human sympathy, has issued a statement which can only be called a shocking attempt to use the death of a dedicated American as fuel for its irresonsible paranoiac attacks.

"I am sure that true Americans will repudiate this cynical statement."

Other U.S. intelligence sources said Counterspy's identification of Welch "set him up" for murder.

"It was not difficult to link Welch's former Lima CIA connection with his more recent post in Athens," one source said. "So, he was a marked man."

Another source said bitterly: "He was fingered."

David A. Phillips, a CIA veteran who worked with Welch in South America, said:

"Welch was a brilliant multilingual officer and scholar. Without question he was one of the most prominent of the younger senior officials in the agency. All indications were that he was destined to be one the very senior officials in the agency."

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