

SFChronicle

# CIA Nominee Colby Says He'd Limit Spying

## Washington

William E. Colby said yesterday that as director of the Central Intelligence Agency he would insist that the CIA refrain from domestic investigations and curb its involvement in secret wars overseas.

Testifying before the Senate Armed Services committee on his nomination to be the new director, Colby acknowledged that the congressional intent embodied in the 1947 law creating the agency was probably violated when the CIA was directed to support a secret war in Laos in 1964.

He also said the agency had made a mistake in providing equipment that was used by E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of the convicted Watergate conspirators, in the 1971 burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

## SESSION

Colby, who is CIA deputy director for operations — the agency's division for covert operations — was questioned for nearly two hours in open session by Senator Stuart Symington (Dem-Mo.), the acting committee chairman and the only Senator present for the hearing.

Never before has a prospective director been so closely cross-examined in public on the policies he believes his largely secret



UPI Telephoto

WILLIAM E. COLBY  
At Senate hearing

agency should follow.

The result was that Colby took several policy questions that reassured Symington, who announced at the conclusion of the hearing that he will enthusiastically support the nomination.

To Symington, who as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations committee drawn in at the direction of the National Security Council because it was supposed to be a covert operation in which the U.S. could not be officially involved.

The difficulty with such operations, however, he said, is that they get so big that they are no longer covert.

The Laotian operation was undertaken under a provision of the 1947 National Security Act authorizing the agency to "perform such first exposed the way the agency was supporting an irregular army of Meo tribesmen and Thai soldiers in Laos, Colby gave assurances that it is "very unlikely" that the agency will get involved in such activities in the future.

## COVERT

In the case of Laos, he explained the agency was other functions and duties affecting national security as the National Security Council may direct."

Somewhat reluctantly, Colby provided guarded insight into such operations by explaining that they were ordered by a special National Security Council committee known as the "40 committee" now headed by Henry A. Kissinger, the President's national security adviser.

Colby took exception to a Symington characterization that under this provision the agency is being turned into "the king's men, the President's army."

But he acknowledged that such operations divert the agency from what he said should be its "primary focus," foreign intelligence gathering.

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