

C.I.A. Destruction of Tapes Reported

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 29 (AP)—William E. Colby, director of Central Intelligence, said Tuesday that the C.I.A. could find only one tape recording bearing on the Watergate affair and that it had destroyed all its other tapes from that period.

In a telephone interview, Mr. Colby said: "Senator [Howard] Baker asked us if there were any other tapes that bore on the subject. And we don't have any other on this subject at the moment. We had periodic destruction of our tapes."

Mr. Baker, the Tennessee Republican who is vice-chairman of the Senate Watergate committee, confirmed in another telephone interview that he had requested any C.I.A. tapes bearing on Watergate.

He declined to say specifically what he was seeking, but said that the C.I.A. had been cooperating fully and that he expected to get something.

Mr. Colby's comments followed a Columbia Broadcasting System report Tuesday night saying that the C.I.A. has destroyed numerous tape recordings considered vital to the Watergate investigation.

[The network said the tapes might have included secretly made recordings of conversations between President Nixon and officials of the C.I.A.]

[At least one Senator had been trying to get the tapes, C.B.S. said, to find material to support C.I.A. claims that it had only limited connection with the break-in at the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist and what it called the "spiriting away" of Dita Beard, then a lobbyist for International Telephone and Telegraph Company.]

Mr. Baker confirmed that he had talked with Mr. Colby about the matter over the weekend.

Mr. Colby said that the one tape the agency had that fitted Mr. Baker's request was of a conversation on June 22, 1971, between E. Howard Hunt Jr., of

the White House special investigations—or "plumbers"—unit, and Marine Gen. Robert E. Cushman, then deputy director of the intelligence agency.

The transcript of that tape has been entered into the record of the Senate Watergate committee. Mr. Colby said it also had been supplied to the Watergate special prosecutor's office and several other Congressional committees.

He said the agency would supply Mr. Baker with the tape itself. "Anything we own he can have," Mr. Colby said.

But, Mr. Colby said, "Over the last 15 years, we have made tapes but periodically they were torn up the way you tear up old notes or old checks after income tax time. And we have not made any tapes in the past year."

He said the Cushman-Hunt tape, made by Mr. Cushman in his own office, "survived normal procedures of destruction because it was put in a separate drawer somehow."

Mr. Colby, who moved up to

the top job in the agency on May 10, 1973, said, "This is before my tenure, but as I understand it, we would collect our tapes for a year or two and when the storage space got too full, there would be a request to destroy the old ones and the answer would come down to go ahead."

In the tape transcript, Mr. Hunt asked Mr. Cushman to provide two things: "flash alias documentation . . . and some degree of physical disguise for a one-time op—in and out."