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Allegation Is Denied By Colson

Former White House aide Charles W. Colson denied yesterday any knowledge of an allegation attributed to him that President Nixon was considering firing Central Intelligence Agency Director William E. Colby.

Colson was responding to published assertions by Washington private investigator Richard L. Bast growing out of two lengthy conversations between the two men at Bast's home last month.

In the course of those discussions, according to Bast, Colson claimed the President had told him he was considering firing Colby because of a suspected CIA involvement in the Watergate break-in and

cover-up.

The former White House aide acknowledged that he had met with Bast "in confidence in an effort to explore a possible professional relationship." He said that "none of the statements I made to Mr. Bast were intended for public consumption."

Bast, in response to Colson's statement last night, said, when he talked to me last "Mr. Colson was either lying when he talked to me last month or he was lying in his press release" on the subject of the President's alleged statement about Colby.

"I will swear under penalty of law to my veracity," Bast said. "After hearing his statement this evening, I doubt that Mr. Colson will do the same." The investigator said the former Nixon adviser agreed to release him from "any bond of confidentiality" after Colson's sentencing in U.S. District Court.

Colson said he talked to Bast "in a very offhand fashion, largely exploring theories, for many of which I had been unable to obtain factual support."

Rep. Lucien Nedzi (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Armed Services Intelligence Subcommittee, said his panel has had for many months a 25-page CIA document which Colson described in his conversations with Bast. Nedzi said the memo, written by Eric W. Eisenstadt, chief of the CIA's central cover staff, produced no conclusive evidence of an undisclosed implication of the agency in the Watergate scandal.

The document, said Nedzi, summarizes relationships between the CIA and the Washington public relations firm of Robert R. Mullen & Co. The Mullen company employed convicted Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. after he retired from the CIA. It also provided a private cover for CIA operatives at two of its overseas offices, according to informed officials.

Senate Watergate committee sources also denied an allegation attributed by Bast to Colson that the committee had been told of 300 break-ins by Watergate conspirator Eugenio Martinez.

In his statement, Colson said yesterday that he would "explain my views and whatever facts I know to appropriate investigative bodies."