

# Defense Fund Drive for Ex-F.B.I.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 19—William E. Simon, the former Secretary of the Treasury, said today that a group that has been raising funds for a former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent recently indicted in New York would also raise funds for Richard Helms if the former Director of Central Intelligence was indicted.

Mr. Simon said that he had no information that Mr. Helms would be indicted by a Federal grand jury now investigating him for possible perjury and obstruction of justice. But in a statement that included a strongly worded attack on Justice Department investigations of present and former law enforcement and intelligence officers, Mr. Simon said, "If Richard Helms is indicted, or any other agents of the C.I.A., the Ad Hoc Citizens' Legal Defense Fund will expand its activities to support them."

He, former Senator James L. Buckley, a Conservative-Republican of New York, and Clare Booth Luce, a former Ambassa-

dor, organized the group last spring to raise funds for John J. Kearney, the F.B.I. agent who was indicted on charges stemming from the bureau's investigation of Weather Underground fugitives.

Justice Department officials have recently said that the investigation of Mr. Helms was nearing a close, and that a decision would be made soon on whether to seek an indictment.

Benjamin R. Civiletti, the head of the criminal division, said today that the matter "is still under investigation and review here in the criminal division," but would not comment on when a decision might be made.

## Target of Investigation

Mr. Helms was informed by the Justice Department last January that he was a target of a Federal grand jury investigation, which was reviewing testimony that he had given a Senate committee in 1973. The issue, Justice Department sources said at the time, was whether Mr. Helms and officials of the International Tele-

## Agent Would Aid Helms, Simon Says

phone and Telegraph Company had fabricated and coordinated statements concerning I.T.T. and C.I.A. activities in Chile.

Today, Mr. Simon said, "There appears to be a concerted effort afoot to weaken and neutralize the nation's law-enforcement and intelligence-gathering agencies through legal harassment, judicial weakness and a spate of Congressional investigations."

He said that his group has raised more than \$200,000 from more than 8,000 individual contributors in three months.

### National Security Issues

One of the issues facing the Justice Department, sources there have said, is the question of whether an attempt to prosecute Mr. Helms might raise legitimate "national security" issues, because of the great amount of material about the intelligence agency operations that would have to be introduced into evidence.

Administration officials have said that

the Justice Department itself would make the decision whether or not it should try to indict Mr. Helms, but that President Carter would decide what material could be made public and, finally, whether any prosecution would be possible.

Attorneys for Mr. Helms would not comment today on Mr. Simon's statement, nor on whether they expected an indictment.

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