

Colby Asks Tight Guard On Secrets

By Laurence Stern

Washington Post Staff Writer

A House subcommittee began the politically sensitive task yesterday of trying to draw tighter criminal sanctions against those accused of spilling national security secrets.

Central Intelligence Agency Director William E. Colby appeared before the House Armed Services Intelligence Subcommittee to reiterate his request for new statutory authority for maintaining secrecy on intelligence sources and methods.

His plea came as an outgrowth of the legal battle over the book, "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence," by former CIA official Victor Marchetti and former State Department intelligence officer John D. Marks.

The House subcommittee, headed by Rep. Lucien Nedzi (D-Mich.), asked the Justice Department to come up with additional language for writing new secrecy safeguards.

The chief enforcement tool now available to Colby is the espionage law which requires the agency to prove to a jury that the suspected leaker of secrets intended to transmit them to a foreign power.

Another device is the secrecy contract signed by employees of the CIA and other intelligence agencies which is now being challenged in the Marchetti case as an abridgment of employees' First Amendment rights.

Colby is seeking authority to initiate criminal prosecution against those who in his opinion divulge classified information, and to file injunctions to prevent disclosure of such secrets through publication or other means.

The Justice and State departments are understood to have objected to several features of Colby's draft proposal which is now being circulated within the government by the Office of Management and Budget.

Neither agency has made public its objections to the proposed amendment to the National Security Act.

Colby, during his appearance yesterday, acknowledged that the CIA has made "some mistakes in recent years" by involvement in domestic security functions—especially in the Watergate case. The agency's 1947 charter prohibits it from engaging in domestic police, law enforcement or internal security functions.

He testified in generally favorable terms on a subcommittee draft bill designed to prevent a recurrence of CIA involvement in domestic political or security matters.