

Data Show Colby Backed Study
of Legality of Spying

by John M. Crewdson

Washington, Feb. 12 - William E. Colby, while Director of Central Intelligence, approved a secret, comprehensive study of the legal basis for the foreign and domestic activities of the Federal intelligence agencies, according to a copy of a confidential memorandum obtained by The New York Times.

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One aspect of the study concluded that, until 1974,*there had existed no legal or constitutional grounds for covert political or military operations conducted by the C.I.A. without the advance approval of Congress, a finding that directly contradicts the formal position taken publicly by the intelligence agency.

*1974 Foreign Assistance Act