

The CIA: Time to Come In f

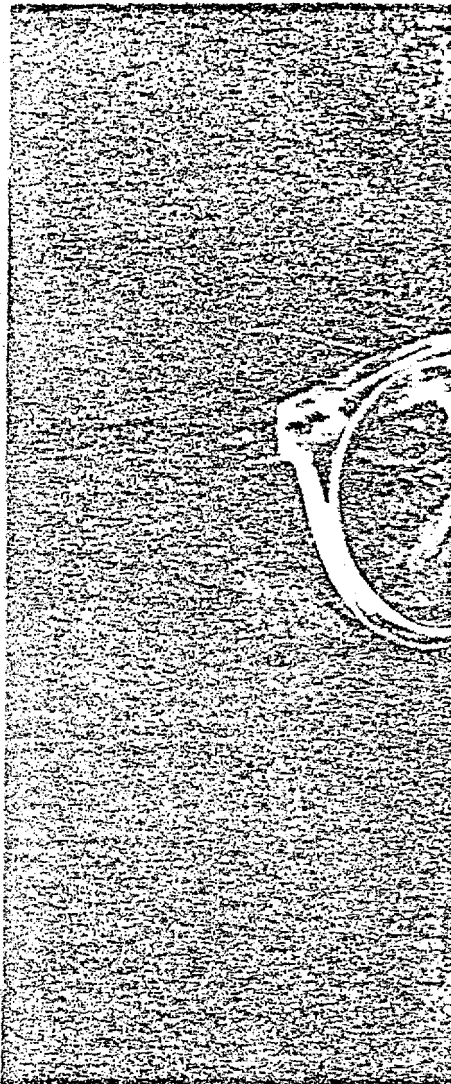
Question: "Under what international law do we have a right to attempt to destabilize the constitutionally elected government of another country?"

Answer: "I am not going to pass judgment on whether it is permitted or authorized under international law. It is a recognized fact that historically as well as presently, such actions are taken in the best interest of the countries involved."

That blunt response by President Gerald Ford at his press conference last week was either remarkably careless or remarkably candid. It left the troubling impression, which the Administration afterward did nothing to dispel, that the U.S. feels free to subvert another government whenever it suits American policy. In an era of détente with the Soviet Union and improving relations with China, Ford's words seemed to represent an anachronistic, cold-war view of national security reminiscent of the 1950s. Complained Democratic Senator Frank Church of Idaho with considerable hyperbole: "[It is] tantamount to saying that we respect no law save the law of the jungle."

The question on "destabilizing" foreign governments followed Ford's confirmation that the Nixon Administration had authorized the Central Intelligence Agency to wage an \$8 million campaign in 1970-73 to aid opponents of Chilean President Salvador Allende's Marxist government (see box page 21). Until last week, members of both the Nixon and Ford Administrations had flatly denied that the U.S. had been involved in undermining Allende's regime. They continue to insist that the CIA was not responsible for the 1973 coup that left Allende dead and a repressive right-wing junta in his place.

Congressmen were outraged by the news that they had once again been misled by the Executive Branch. More important, disclosure of the Chile operation helped focus and intensify the debate in Congress and the nation over the CIA: Has the agency gone too far in recent years? Should it be barred from interfering in other countries' domestic affairs? Where it has erred, was the CIA out of control or was the White House at fault for misdirecting and misusing the agency? Should it be more tightly supervised, and if so, by whom? In addition, the controversy spotlighted the fundamental dilemma posed by an open, democratic society using covert activity—the "dirty tricks" or "black" side of intelligence organizations—as an instrument of foreign policy.



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY DIRECTOR WILLIAM E. COLBY
"There's nothing wrong with accountability."

At the center of the storm was William Egan Colby, 54, the CIA's director for the past year. Shrewd and capable, Colby has sought from the day he took office as director to channel more of the CIA's efforts into the gathering, evaluation and analysis of information and less into covert actions—the "operational" side of the intelligence business. Says he: "The CIA's cloak-and-dagger days have ended."

Certain Actions. But obviously, not quite. It was Colby who oversaw the last months of the CIA activity in Chile as the agency's deputy director for operations in 1973, though this operation apparently ended shortly after he became director. But it was also Colby who disclosed details of the covert action to a closed hearing of the House Armed Ser-

vices Subcommittee on Intelligence last April 22. A summary of his testimony was leaked to the press two weeks ago. By the time Ford met with the press, Colby's revelations were more than a week old; the President had been briefed by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and doubtless was ready to field reporters' questions. Said Ford: "Our Government, like other governments, does take certain actions in the intelligence field to help implement foreign policy and protect national security. I am informed reliably that Communist nations spend vastly more money than we do for the same kind of purposes."

Since so much had already leaked out, Ford perhaps had no choice but to make an admission. But his statement seemed to set no or few limits on clan-