

L2 William W. Colby

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Associated press Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana

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Since I felt it was appropriate for me to withdraw from the discussion of the events down below and the election so that I wouldn't be accused of influencing an internal election here in the Associated Press, I did not have the chance to salt the right number of questions around the audience, consequently, I would start if I may by warming up a little bit here with several which were presented to me by my colleagues here on the dias, and that's to get it started at which point I would be very happy to either answer the question or try to explain why I can't.

Question: The first question: Now that Agee's book about his CIA experience has been published in Great Britain and Canada, do you see any reason for the CIA acting to stop him from publishing it in the United States? And associated with that, what concerns you most about the facts in the book?

Answer: Well, the second is easier than the first. The thing that concerned me most was that he reached back into his memory and he picked up every name of anybody he had ever worked with and published it in the appendix (carefully arranged in alphabetical order for convenience)--names of people, both foreigners and Americans, who had worked with us to some degree. I am pleased to say that not every one was accurate, although there was a high degree of accuracy which naturally puts a number of people in considerable jeopardy in South America. The question of whether we could stop this publication: we obviously are engaged in a legal controversy with another ex-employee to get him to abide by the agreement he made that he would leave the secrets he learned during his employment with CIA in CIA and not expose them after he left. We could not enforce that against Mr. Agee because he carefully stayed out of the United States. As to whether there is any reason for the CIA acting to stop the publishing, I think there's plenty of reason. I think it's quite unconscionable and reprehensible for a man who has served in our intelligence service, in delicate matters which we've discussed, to break his agreements to keep those secret; to profit therefrom, and to discourage the numbers of Americans who still work in that intelligence service from the discipline which is an essential element of it. As to what I can do, that I just have to leave to the lawyers. There are some things you can do, some things you cannot do, within our judicial system, and I for one do not propose to go out beyond our judicial system.

Question: The second question: Allen Dulles once told the Warren Committee he would lie to anyone but the President in order to keep an intelligence secret. What is your philosophy on the position of an intelligence director as to misleading the public or Congress in security matters?

Answer: I answered that, I think, in considerable detail in my confirmation hearing. I do not believe I can tell a lie. I think there are some things I cannot tell, in which case I think I have to stop talking about such things that need to be secret. This is a fact of my profession that some things do need to be kept secret, but in that case, I must allow Mr. Dulles to speak for himself. We have arrangements by which we do report our most sensitive matters to selected-- and selected by the Congress--Committees of Congress, and to various other oversight procedures that we have in the American government. These are given full access, and I have undertaken enough of these not only to answer the questions of the Chairmen of the Committees that supervise us, but to call to their attention things that they should be aware of. This in the business world is called the "No Surprises Rule"--that the President of a corporation cannot afford to let the Board be surprised. That system works pretty well with our relationship with the committees as well.

Question: The next question: CIA officials complain that the press is being manipulated by Agency critics and bitter former employees but your off-the-record briefings seems to contribute more to widespread reporting of the Agency's version of a recent story than to convincing editors that the story can be withheld for national security reasons.

Answer: That is a difficult question to answer for one particular reason. It is important that no official of our government give any official confirmation of a particular activity and, consequently, I am not free to talk about that particular event. I think I can talk about the relationship with the press, however. I believe that in talking to a newsman, and trying to get him to see the logic of not publicizing a certain matter, it is essential to tell him enough about it so that he is actually convinced that it is in the interest of the country not to disclose it. This unfortunately does expose some things to him, but I think that, as I have a number of times said, the important thing is not that another American who accepts the discipline of the secret learns it, the important thing is whether the foreigner learns it, and in that process it is sometimes

essential to explain a story in order to try to get it modified or even withheld. I must confess that this is a very rare event that we even try, and I think that I should reassure you that this is not a common, everyday aspect of our daily work. Approaching various publishers and editors to try to get them to sit on something is a very rare event, indeed.

Question: And one last question, at which point I would be very happy to answer any from the floor. Has recent criticism of CIA affected recruiting for the CIA?

Answer: Here, I think, we did benefit a little bit from the recent publicity, perhaps on that "I don't care what you say, so long as you spell my name right." We normally get about 600 inquiries for possible jobs every couple of weeks. In the first two weeks of January of this year, we got 1700 inquiries. The fact is that we got some free political advertising I suppose you would call it--and I wouldn't say the economic situation had nothing to do with it, but we did get a large number of inquiries for possible employment. Questions, please.

Question: (Inaudible)

Answer: Good question. Aren't the American taxpayers entitled to know how much the CIA receives annually? This, I think, is a matter for the Congress to determine. I urge that it not be publicized. Not because it would be any great disaster if one total figure one year were revealed, but I think over a course of several years you would very soon, seeing the trend line, generate the natural questions, "Why did it go up? Why did it go down? What is it made up of?" I think you would very quickly be into a detailed discussion of the different programs, and how much is done on one or the other? But as I say, this is a matter for the Congress. Last May, I believe it was, the Senate voted 2-1 against the proposal that a single figure be publicly revealed. If the Congress voted to the contrary, of course, we would abide by it.

Question: (Inaudible)

Answer: Various proposals have been mentioned. Did everyone hear that question? No. The question was: "With the bad name, with the 'sensational lead' quality of CIA, would it be a good idea to break it up, divide up its functions in the other Departments, and get rid of the name?" The answer to that question, I think, is that you probably wouldn't

actually lose the quality of attractiveness of the secret activities, that they would be followed to the agency to which they went. We have experimented over the years with various ways to organize intelligence. We at one time had the political operations separated from the collection operations. We've tried in various ways to separate the collection from the analysis operations. I think the fundamental principle which lies behind the formation of CIA was that you take an agency, and you put it independent of the departments and other agencies who have an interest in some particular program, policy, budget, weapons system, or whatever. And that, thereby, you are able to get an independent assessment of some of these problems that we face. I think this to me is something that is very precious that we need. I think there are a number of people who think the Pentagon Papers reflect a little of this, in CIA's taking a position which may be uncomfortable from time to time in the face of the other departments, but it is part of the thinking process that we ask our leaders to go through where they do listen, not only to the proposal but also to the opposition assessment of that particular thing. I think that when you tinker with bureaucratic structures, you really always have to look at how much are you improving and how much are you hurting, and frequently the balance is not all that simple.

Question: (Inaudible)

Answer: Well, the Russian's, I am very happy to say, is quite a different affair than ours. Obviously they do get, for free, a great deal of information, so that they do not have to spend the money or take the risk to learn about our political state, within our structure, or our development of various weapons systems, and so forth. We do have to spend that money and take those risks. A great deal of the KGB efforts, particularly, is devoted to internal security-- which I hope that we will be barred from because I certainly want to be barred from it. In their foreign intelligence activity they, of course, have a separate structure that they can conduct political operations through, which is the Communist Party structure of various countries so that that is a case in which their approach has distinguished the intelligence approach from the political action approach. In the work against our country, they are still recruiting, trying to recruit Americans. In the past four years, something like 400 separate approaches have been made to Americans abroad for possible recruitment by Soviet intelligence services. Now these are approaches which are based on various kinds of appeals or the exertion of pressure to try to get somebody

to help them out. There is some degree of paranoia, frankly, in the belief that a junior officer can give you something that the subscription can't sometimes. They do have those rose-colored glasses and they assume that our free society is all a great conspiracy and that your newspapers are all a part of the Wall Street, military, industrial complex. Consequently, what you say is really a put-up, that the real truth is hidden underneath there. They are consequently trying to penetrate into this great conspiracy and get the truth out of it. They are, I'm glad to say, however, beginning to learn the rules, the lesson that we learned a number of years ago, which is the importance of research and careful analysis of the openly available facts. The Institute for the Study of the U.S.A., for instance, is a carbon copy of some of the Russian institutes that we have set up around this country, and academic centers, and other foundations, and so forth. This can only be good, really, in the sense that the more they began to really understand this society, the safer we all will be because difficulties normally stem from misunderstandings and misperceptions among nations.

Question: Mr. Colby, you mentioned something, I think you called it a "good" secret, which should be kept and not told. Could you tell us an example of a "good" secret, not one that has not been told, but one that has been told?

Answer: Well, a "good" secret that has been told, is a number of the names in Mr. Agee's book. A number of the "good" secrets that I think should be kept are some of our relationships with foreigners around the world whose reputations could suffer a great deal in their own country. One particular area that I think is a "good" secret is the cooperation that a number of American businesses have given us over the past. If it comes out that the X.Y.Z. Export Corporation, which has \$100,000,000 a year business, allowed us to have one individual work abroad under the cover of X.Y.Z. Export Corporation, I think you could very easily count on that \$100,000,000 business going down to a very small figure in a number of senses, because the smear would be applied not only to that one individual but to every employee of that company. I think the name of that X.Y.Z. Corporation is a very important secret which should be kept.

Question: Mr. Colby, you've discussed the information gathering function of intelligence this morning. Could you tell us when you feel that the intelligence function should also extend to covert political and economic involvements with other countries, sabotage, and subversion?

Answer: Yes. This is a question which I think is a legitimate one. The fact is that during World War II, we did quite a lot about it. During the Cold War we were heavily engaged in this kind of activity. We were helping various friends of America and opponents of Communist expansion in various parts of the world, supporting them and assisting them in various ways. A very substantial portion of CIA's budget was used on that kind of operation during the 50s and 60s. I think, in great part, with some rather flagrant exceptions, this was successful. The flagrant exceptions, of course, include the Bay of Pigs--and it is very hard to justify that as a good secret anymore! The fact was that there was a major effort to take over Western Europe by subversion as well as direct military confrontation. That was met by NATO, the Marshall Plan and, as I say, some CIA operations. There was an effort to expand Communist insurgency throughout Latin America in 1960, and I think that was met by a variety of political and economic programs and some CIA activity. There was an effort to capture the image of world peace on behalf of the Soviet Union during the 50s and 60s, a variety of peace conferences and youth conferences and all the rest. This was competed with largely by CIA, or with CIA support, not by CIA. This effort on their part essentially failed, which I think did us in very good stead. When the anti-war and peace movement became important in this country, even those things that people questioned whether we should have done revealed our overall conclusion that there was essentially no foreign manipulation or support of the American peace movement during the late 60s and early 70s. I think if the Russians had actually captured the peace movement, in a very positive sense, you might have had a very dangerous situation. And we did have a dangerous situation when the Russians captured the image of anti-facism in the late 30s and profitted from that by the recruitment of some very long-term assets such as Mr. Philby in the British service, Burgess and MacLean, some of the other major figures that they recruited on an ideological basis during that period. That kind of operation does justify meeting the sophisticated kind of attack, sophisticated kind of exertion of influence by another country within a third country, in order to protect our country. I might say that today we do very little of this, and that the very small porportion of our budget, for example, is devoted to this. We also have considerably greater controls on it than perhaps we did once. The Congress in December passed a new law that says that if we are to do any of this, the President must find it important to the national security and I have to go brief six committees of the Congress about it. This is certainly going to reduce any very foolish use of this, and

I think appropriately, because I think it should be used only where it is clearly necessary, clearly supported by the elected representatives of the American people in the interests of the United States.

Question (Inaudible)

Answer: His question is, "Do you approve of CIA agents posing as correspondents?" To this audience I think that is a very good question which I should have mentioned myself. A couple of thoughts. About a year or two ago, it came to the public attention that we were using certain correspondents abroad. CIA was using certain of them. I committed myself at that time to eliminate the use of any staff members of any of your organizations; of any major, any substantial American journalistic enterprise. I said at the same time that I think I still could use the oddstringer, the freelancer<sup>1</sup>, or the representatives of some so-called publication which really isn't a publication--some kind of "Hod Carriers Gazette," or something--and that these I would propose to continue to use. I received a little criticism about the general subject, but I still think that that's probably a reasonable differentiation. It does allow your staff correspondent to be sure, you to be sure, and that your staff correspondent is not a CIA agent without your knowledge, nor is the other staff correspondent a CIA agent with whom you associate when working. It does, however, say that there are some Americans abroad or representatives of America abroad, that do work for CIA.

Question: Is it possible to give us CIA's hindsight judgment about the overthrow of Salvador Allende?

Answer: Well, I have only said a few things about that. Again, it is a problem of what we officially said, but I have said, and it is true, and I said it under oath, that we had nothing to do with the military coup which overthrew President Allende. We had no contacts with those people, and we in no way stimulated or supported or assisted them in a military coup. We did have a program of assisting some of the democratic forces in Chile looking toward the 1976 election. We hoped that those democratic forces would win the 1976 election. The military coup stemmed from the fact that President Allende was such that he created such destruction in that country that eventually the military did move. I reported on our activities rather fully to one of my oversight committees. That testimony was unfortunately late to some extent, and in the process--again, one of the kind of problems we get into in CIA--in the process, the word

"de-stabilization" was added as a description of our activity down there. I have said that was not a clear statement of what we were doing. We were trying to support the democratic forces looking toward the election of 1976, but we were deliberately not trying to "de-stabilize." We did not support the trucker's strike; we did not support some other rather violent demonstrations that took place, but unfortunately, the word got loose. It's a handy word, and it's been applied to CIA's operations all over the world ever since that time. Thank you very much.