

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
24 September 1975

Hearings Hurt U.S. Intelligence Work, Colby Says Here

By RICHARD K. WEIL JR.

Of the Post-Dispatch Staff
Congressional hearings on the Central Intelligence Agency are necessary, CIA Director William E. Colby says, but those being held are having "a very adverse effect" on the agency.

Colby, soft-spoken and friendly in a 45-minute press briefing in St. Louis yesterday, said the hearings "are taking a large part of my time, and that's time I'm not able to spend on problems of intelligence in the future — what we're going to need in the 1980s."

Furthermore, Colby said, recent revelations about the agency have caused the CIA's sources of information around the world to begin "drying up, one by one."

He said CIA sources are worried that their participation in this country's intelligence effort will be disclosed.

"We're very much like journalists," he told reporters. "The sources of your information have to be sacred. If you expose them, you won't be able to use those sources anymore."

Colby was in the area at the personal invitation of G. Duncan Bauman, publisher of the Globe-Democrat, and was a guest of honor at a dinner attended by about 40 of Bauman's friends at the Bogey Club, 9266 Clayton Road, Colby and Bauman met at a publishers' convention in April.

The CIA director appeared eager to repair his agency's image, which has been hurt by recent disclosures.

The CIA has been accused, among other things, of: spying in the United States, in violation of its charter; experimenting with drugs, causing the death of at least one employe; spending \$11,000,000 on covert operations to topple a government in Chile; harboring lethal poisons against orders from the White House; and participating in assassination plots against foreign heads of state, most notably Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Colby said he had made similar visits to Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. Next on his schedule is Boston.

But Colby denied that he was spending a disproportionate amount of time on public relations. He said he had given speeches only 10 times in the last year or year and a half.

Colby said repeatedly that the CIA must "do away with the old idea of intelligence being total secrecy."

Washington sources have said that Colby's refusal to cover up CIA abuses in testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee has earned him the bitter enmity of Richard M. Helms, former CIA director and now ambassador to Iran. Under Helms's leadership, from mid-1966 until January of 1973, many of the abuses took place.

But Colby denied that he and Helms were at odds. Some of the apparently illegal acts when Helms was director occurred "because we thought it was the right thing to do," Colby said.

Of his renunciation of some former CIA tactics, Colby said, "I'm sure that my successor will look back on my regime and find things he wouldn't agree with."

Colby said one reason he had come to St. Louis was that, "it is essential to create an understanding of what intelligence is all about."

But he would not disclose anything about the CIA budget, which former agents have estimated at \$750,000,000 a year.

He would not discuss specific clandestine operations or answer questions about allegations that President John F. Kennedy had been involved in CIA discussions of a plot to assassinate Castro.

But Colby noted that although the CIA had been set up in 1947 as an intelligence agency, its charter allowed "other functions and duties as the National Security Council directs."

A prime example of such "other functions," Colby said, was the CIA's part in planning the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

But Colby said he expected the nonintelligence functions of the CIA to diminish in future years.

"Last year," he said, "Congress turned down by a 3-to-1 margin a bill that would have barred the CIA from any function other than pure intelligence work."

But he said that Congress had passed a bill allowing other projects "only if the President finds it in the interest of national security." Even at that, Colby said, the new law requires information about such activities to be passed on to congressional committees.

Colby, a graduate of Princeton University and Columbia University's law school, was an espionage agent in World War II. After a brief practice of law, he joined the CIA in the Korean War.

His most controversial tour of duty was in the late 1960s, when he was responsible for operation Phoenix, a program aimed at killing key Viet Cong members in Vietnam.

The Phoenix program is said to have been responsible for the killing of more than 20,000 Vietnamese over a period of years that started before Colby took over.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1970, Colby admitted there had been some abuses in the program.

In other remarks during and after the press briefing yesterday, Colby:

(1) Confirmed he had offered to help the Department of Justice investigate a report that E. Howard Hunt, a Watergate burglary conspirator and a former CIA agent had told associates that a senior White House official in the Administration of former President Richard M. Nixon had instructed Hunt to assassinate columnist Jack Anderson. I knew nothing about it until Sunday when I read it in the Washington Post," Colby said.

(2) Said the CIA office in downtown St. Louis had only two functions: to keep in touch with Americans who have business or professional relationships abroad and to interview job applicants and CIA contractors.

(3) Called for strengthening a law that prohibits government agents or former agents from leaking intelligence information.

(4) Complained that the free society in the United States made intelligence gathering easy for Communist nations. "The Soviet military attache can go to the street corner and pick up a copy of Aviation Week," Colby said. "And just by thumbing through it, he can learn that our country spends billions of dollars to find out about his country's activities."

(5) Said the CIA, which once was said to have owned five airlines, was getting out of that business. He said the agency might still have one air company but added, "We don't need it anymore. We have a different kind of operation, now." Colby said he had flown to St. Louis on a commercial airliner.

Colby defended his conten-

Continued

tion that most of what the CIA does must remain secret.

"There are a lot of secrets we have in a democratic society," he said. "We have the secrecy of the ballot box, the secrecy of the grand jury, and the secrecy of diplomacy."

He said that despite increases in electronic surveillance, the CIA must use clandestine operatives to penetrate the "research laboratories and the political decision-making centers" of potential enemies to find out what they are thinking, "what the next form of nuclear missile is going to be."

Asked if he thought that the CIA was misunderstood by the public, Colby said, "We are a little. But that's to be expected."

Colby said, "When someone accuses the Army of having broken the law, everyone knows exactly where the Army fits into things and what the allegations are all about." But, he said, most persons do not know what intelligence or clandestine operations are all about.

Asked whether he thought the Senate and House intelligence committee hearings might be beneficial in the long run for educating the public about the CIA, Colby said: "Maybe they will. But I sure wouldn't want to be quoted as saying that."



CIA Director William E. Colby
"Our sources are drying up, one by one"