

Colorful CIA Chief Top Administrator

Although most of his life is "classified," there are some things that Richard M. Helms just can't keep hidden—his engaging charm, his subtle wit, his cool self-confidence.

In fact, these very-public qualities have made Helms, director of the very-secret Central Intelligence Agency, one of the most sought-after dinner guests in Washington.

But the tall, handsome, colorful Helms is more than just a suave party-goer who happens to have a high-level government job. He is also "a dedicated and immensely professional administrator, a forthright and honest man," said one federal official.

Joined in 1947

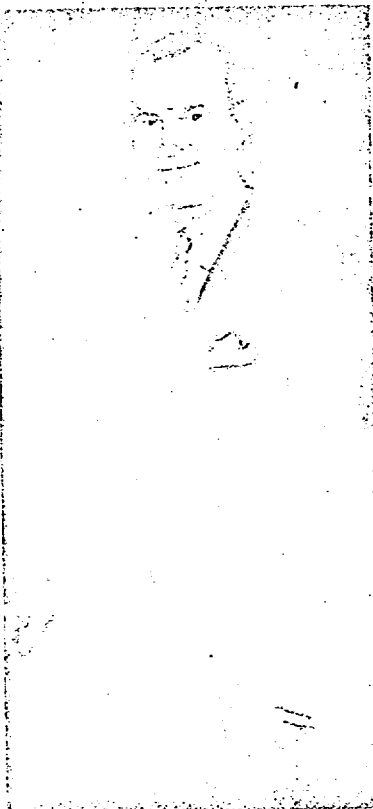
Helms, 59, joined the CIA shortly after it was created in 1947. Over the years, he has been involved in many top-secret international intrigues, a few of which have been made public.

In 1956, for example, just after Nikita Khrushchev gave his secret "de-Stalinization" speech in Moscow, Helms, then deputy director of the CIA's clandestine services, devised a way to use the speech to embarrass the Russians.

He directed agents to dummy up copies of the speech and insert insults about neutral nations and their leaders. After the "speech" was distributed abroad, the red-faced Russians had a difficult time explaining what had happened.

Helms was appointed CIA chief in 1966. He coordinates all foreign intelligence activities, serves as chief intelligence adviser to the White House, and sits as chairman of the United States Intelligence Board, which advises him.

Helms learned his social graces in Europe, where he studied at fashionable schools in Switzerland and Germany. A native of St. Davids, Pa., he was graduated in 1935 from Williams College in Williamstown, Mass., where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.



DIRECTOR: Richard M. Helms, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is responsible for coordinating U. S. foreign intelligence.

Interviews Hitler

Helms then returned to Europe as a reporter for a major wire service. Utilizing his fluency in German (he also speaks French); Helms was able to get an exclusive interview with Adolf Hitler.

In 1937, he joined the Indianapolis Times Publishing Company and later became its national advertising manager. Then, during the Second World War, he worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and as soon as the CIA was created, he signed on.

Through the years, he has served in many capacities with the CIA and, thus, was well prepared to become its director in 1966.

Helms lives in Washington with his second wife, Cynthia, whom he married in 1969. They have five grown children.