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'BINGE' OF CIA CURBS OVER, COLBY SAYS
BY MATTHEW C. RUINN

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- FORMER CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM COLBY IS CONFIDENT REFORMS MADE AT THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY IN THE 1970S WILL REMAIN INTACT DESPITE SOME WATERING DOWN BY THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION.

"THINGS ARE SOBERING UP. I THINK THE NATION HAS SOBERED UP," COLBY SAID IN AN INTERVIEW IN HIS DOWNTOWN LAW OFFICE. "WE WENT ON A BINGE IN THE MID 1970S AND WE DID A LOT OF SILLY THINGS AT THAT TIME WHICH WEREN'T CORRECTING.

"BUT WE ALSO MADE SOME MAJOR CHANGES IN THE INTELLIGENCE MACHINERY OF THE UNITED STATES AND THOSE CHANGES ARE CONTINUING. NOW WHAT WE'RE DOING IS CALIBRATING WHERE ON THE SCALE THE CIA OUGHT TO OPERATE."

THE BESPECTACLED COLBY, 62, A CAREER INTELLIGENCE OFFICIAL, WAS CIA DIRECTOR FROM 1973 TO 1976 UNDER RICHARD NIXON AND GERALD FORD. HE IS NOW PRACTICING LAW, DOING INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING WORK AND LECTURING. A PROponent OF BANNING HANDGUNS, HE MAKES AN OCCASIONAL STATEMENT ON GUN CONTROL.

COLBY SAID HE IS NOT BEING CONSULTED BY THE NEW DIRECTOR, WILLIAM CASEY.

"I CANCELED MY SECURITY CLEARANCES SINCE I LEFT AND I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS SINCE I LEFT. I DON'T THINK IT'S APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO BE HANGING AROUND," HE SAID.

DURING COLBY'S DIRECTORSHIP, WHICH INCLUDED THE WATERGATE AFTERMATH, THE SPY AGENCY CAME UNDER INTENSE CRITICISM FOR COVERT OPERATIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA.

CONGRESS IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS AND INSISTED ON BEING INFORMED OF CIA ACTIVITIES, AND COLBY GAINED A REPUTATION FOR CANDOR WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

"CONGRESS HAS DONE ITS JOB," SAID COLBY. "THEY KNOW THE SECRETS AND THEY HAVE KEPT THE SECRETS."

PRESIDENT REAGAN LAST DECEMBER SIGNED AN EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME ALLOWS THE CIA AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES TO CONDUCT COVERT OPERATIONS INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. THE ORDER PERMITS SURVEILLANCE OF U.S. CITIZENS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY WHEN "SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE" IS SOUGHT.

COLBY SAID DESPITE "CHANGES IN ATMOSPHERICS," HE IS CONFIDENT THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE REFORMS WILL REMAIN.