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Q and A

Furor Hits CIA Sources, Colby Says

William Colby, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was interviewed by Washington Star Staff Writer Jeremiah O'Leary.

Question: Clark Clifford, who as counsel to President Truman participated in writing the law which established the CIA, said recently that the ground rules need to be updated, to be renovated. Do you concur with that view?

Colby: Well, I've made certain recommendations for changing our act already. A year and a half ago when I was confirmed, I suggested that we add the word "foreign" to the word "intelligence" wherever it appears in our act so it's clear it's foreign intelligence that's the job of this agency and not domestic. I recommended other things to clarify exactly what the CIA ought to be able to do in the United States and what it should not be able to do in the United States.

Q: That requires an act of Congress?

A: Yes. It hasn't been passed, but there was legislation last year — I supported it — and I'm sure these congressional investigating committees will get into a rather fundamental look at some of these questions.

Q: Would you ever go out of the business of operating in terms of your own security within the United States, in places like New York where the U.N. is located, or in places like Miami, where there are many Cubans?

A: Well, I think, in the first place, that we ought to be able to collect foreign intelligence in America. I think we ought to collect it voluntarily from Americans, and we ought to be able to collect it from foreigners.

Q: Interviewing returned travelers?

A: That sort of thing, yes. We do a great deal of that, and there are a awful lot of Americans who very kindly help us and support us on this. We do make commitments that we won't expose them as our sources. That's going to be one of the things I'm insisting on — that we not expose them in the course of these investiga-

tions. And I think I've received a very sympathetic response from Sen. Church on this. If there's a reasonable basis for our withholding an identity or something, he certainly has given every indication that he will give full consideration to that.

Q: Given the scrutiny by the Rockefeller commission, by several committees of Congress, by the press — can the CIA operate effectively as a clandestine service under these conditions?

A: Well, it's having a hard time. We have a number of individual agents abroad who have told us that they really don't want to work for us anymore.

Q: Agents?

A: Foreigners, working foreigners. We have had a number of Americans who have indicated that they don't want to work with us anymore — not employes, but Americans who have helped us in various ways. We have a number of foreign intelligence services that have indicated great concern about collaboration with us — whether this will be exposed, and they will be subjected to intense criticism in their country. I think this is a very serious problem for our country. We are in the process of losing some of the information that otherwise we would be getting.

Q: You mean that some of these other services and other individuals are no longer confident?

A: They're beginning to pull back, or some of them have just stopped working with us. And, of course, more serious and yet not measurable is the number who would have agreed to work with us, but now won't agree to work with us. I have seen a couple of cases where individuals had indicated they thought they would work with us, and then came around here very recently and said, "I know I did agree, but I don't think I will."

Q: Have your actual operations overseas been affected by the current furor?

A: Oh, yes, I think the current furor has laid a particular problem on us in that people exaggerate CIA. I see that in Mexico there was an accusation this week that we organized the excitement at the university, which, of course, we had

have the pro is used as shout about i tries around I think we ha ous proble consider ca we want to and take a ing him in helping hir leaks that v this stage, his politica ly.

Q: What effect of bo Philip Ag names and a great number of identities?

A: Well, I think that's absolutely unconscionable and reprehensible for an officer who served with us, accepted our discipline, agreed with our activities, signed a very warm and friendly letter on his resignation indicating that he valued highly his association with us, and that he would forever maintain the relationship as one of pride and trust, that if he could ever do anything for us he would be happy to . . . I've got an idea or so as to what he might do. He has named every name he could think of that was anyhow associated with us. There is at least one family who has been put under considerable pressure as a result of this. A girl hounded out of school because her father's name appears in it. We have had to make rather massive changes in our situation in that area to prevent people being subjected to hardships because of this revelation. And the danger is that this kind of thing can go into the whole action of various terrorist movements. Mr. Mitrone, as you know, was murdered in Latin America. There is a school of thought that says that was a patriotic act because he was alleged to be a CIA officer. He was not a CIA officer. And I contend that that kind of a murder is totally unjustifiable. But Mr. Agee has put a number of people under direct threat of exactly that thing happening to them.

Q: A couple of years ago, there was a similar furor and public investigation involving the agency and ITT in Chile. What is the truth about the agency's role in

created by — military did move against him. If you ask whether that was a CIA success or failure, I would say it was a failure, because the program we had in mind did not take place, which was that the democratic forces would succeed eventually through elections in Chile.

Q: Was the agency aware that the Chilean armed forces intended to move when they did?

A: We had certain intelligence coverage of it and we had a series of alerts indicating that it was about to happen. They key to it was whether several different forces would get together to do it, and we had several indications that they would on a certain date and then they didn't. And then they would on another date, and then they didn't. And then that they would in September and they did.

Q: Did the junta ask the United States or the CIA whether the new regime would be recognized?

A: They certainly did not ask the CIA, and I don't know of any other requests.

Q: There have been a number of reports that you gave a verbal addendum to President Ford after submitting your 50-page report involving the word "assassination." Did you make such a report?

A: I think I'll let the President speak for himself on that. He has spoken on it, and I think it's appropriate. Otherwise, I frankly think that this is a subject that I would like to just stay in a total no comment position.