

~~Secret~~*Chapter 11***The Pike Committee**

We were certainly not asked to write a report which would meet the approval of the CIA. Of course Mr. Colby is not going to like it. We said that the CIA did a lousy job.

Congressman Otis Pike (D-NY), 1976¹

The real issue involved here, the real gut issue, is: "Can nine members of this House unilaterally release information that could be damaging to this Nation?" You see, once it is published, it is kind of like the fellow jumping off the Empire State Building and wanting to change his mind halfway down. It simply cannot be done.

Congressman Dale Milford (D-TX), 29 January 1976²

The House Select Committee on Intelligence (Pike committee) was the third—and, chronologically, the last—major investigation that engulfed Colby, the CIA, and the White House during the period 1975-76. Initially headed by Lucien Nedzi (D-MI), the House probe did not really begin until July 1975, when the Representatives ousted a lackadaisical Nedzi from the chairmanship and turned it over to Otis Pike.

Mr. Pike's committee conducted itself flamboyantly and irresponsibly, its inquiries damaged by fiercely held preconceptions and a combative style. Although in certain respects this committee focused on issues of more consequence than did its Senate counterpart, its conduct was more extreme and self-defeating. The Pike committee's working relationships with Colby and the White House were more acrimonious because it preferred confrontation and the issuing of subpoenas where the Church committee had been willing to work out informal compromises.

One of the sharpest differences between these two committees was their staffs. For the most part, the Pike committee's staffers were less able and mature than their Senate counterparts. Although the Church committee's staff had generally acted more responsibly than their chairman, many

¹Congressman Otis Pike to journalist Oriana Falacci, as cited in *The New Republic*, 3 April 1976, pp. 9 and 11.

²*Congressional Record*, 29 January 1976, p. 1,639.

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of the House committee's staffers were even more erratic than Chairman Pike. Over and above their common effort to uncover CIA's shortcomings and alleged illegalities, the two committees also shared their ultimate fate: after rocketing noisily for a while, both eventually fell to Earth. The Senate committee did so with a whimper; the House committee, with a bang.

Despite his many troubles with the Pike committee, the Church committee had far more influence on Colby's longevity as DCI. He was also less involved personally with the Pike group than he was with Frank Church and Co. From the outset, Colby nonetheless faced vexing problems with respect to the House probe. High among these was that body's unique Rule XI, giving *all* members of the House access to all House documents, and the question of how to get a constructive chairman.

The first chairman of the House investigative group, Lucien Nedzi, had for some time headed the House Armed Services Special Subcommittee on Intelligence where he had generally supported the Agency. Colby's severe problems with the House investigative effort did not begin until July, on the eve of Otis Pike's becoming chairman.

The Nedzi and Pike Committees

In January, however, Colby's immediate concern centered on a lawsuit filed by Congressman Michael Harrington (D-MA) that sought an injunction against CIA foreign and domestic operations. Harrington charged that all of the Agency's operations were illegal. In his view, previous Congressional intelligence subcommittees had all been "willing patsies" for the Agency, providing a "fictional cover" of Congressional approval for CIA activities. He included the Rockefeller Commission in this criticism, calling it simply "another example of CIA coddling." Harrington castigated the Nedzi subcommittee for not moving quickly to investigate the CIA and submitted a bill to create a new House select committee on intelligence, which he hoped to chair.³ His initiatives created a major problem for the House, and for Colby: how to deny Harrington—who had earlier leaked classified House testimony to the press—from chairing a new select committee on intelligence.

Nedzi did not sit still for this attack on his position. Determined that he would lead any House investigation of the CIA, *he* had announced on 6 January 1975 that his subcommittee would conduct its own investigation of the charges against the CIA, no matter what the Justice Department and the Rockefeller Commission might do.⁴ Nedzi also worked diligently to

³Congressman Michael Harrington, remarks to the House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, 17 January 1975, E59-60; Stewart Dill McBride, in the *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 January 1975; column by Mary Russell, *The Washington Post*, 8 January 1975.
⁴*The New York Times*, 7 January 1975.

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keep Harrington off any House intelligence investigating committee. The White House made parallel efforts—including a suggestion from Presidential Counsel John Marsh that Harrington be sent a “screw you” response.⁵

Meanwhile, in a basically straight party line vote (286 to 120) on 19 February, the House established a Select Committee on Intelligence and named Nedzi its chairman. That group consisted of three Republicans and 10 Democrats—including Harrington. Nedzi told George Cary “in the utmost confidence” that Harrington’s inclusion had been the child of politics. Speaker Carl Albert (D-OK) had appointed Harrington to the Select Committee as a result of direct and unyielding pressure from House Majority Leader Tip O’Neill (D-MA). John Marsh of the White House told Cary that a relative of Mr. O’Neill’s had recently run for the position of Lt. Governor of the state of Massachusetts, and Harrington had supported his candidacy. Cary believed that the pressure on Mr. O’Neill was “obviously a quid pro quo.”⁶

Nedzi’s new committee dragged its feet for days. Seven weeks after being commissioned, it had hired neither staff director nor staff; in contrast, the Senate’s Church committee took on a staff director and 40 staffers within its first month. After nine weeks, the only officer Nedzi’s committee had appointed was a security director who, according to *The Washington Post*, had “nothing to guard.”⁷ This leisurely pace created still another problem for Colby, by giving a number of other House committees (including the House committees on Government Operations, Judiciary, Post Office and Civil Service, and Interstate and Foreign Commerce) time to try to get into the act of investigating US intelligence.⁸

Nedzi’s committee did not select a staff director until 13 May, some 12 weeks after having been formed. Nedzi chose A. Searle Field, 30, formerly an aide to Connecticut Republican Senator Lowell Weicker. Journalist George Lardner reported that Congressman Ronald Dellums (D-CA), a member of Nedzi’s committee, preferred Ramsey Clark for the post, observing that Dellums and other members of the committee worried that, when one pitted Field “against the Helms of the world, the FBI directors of the world,” the potential for slaughter would be obvious.⁹

⁵George Cary, Legislative Counsel, Memorandum for the Record, “Conversation with Mr. John O. Marsh, Counselor to the President, Regarding Representative Michael Harrington and the House Select Committee on Intelligence,” 24 February 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Confidential Eyes Only~~).

⁶Cary, Memorandum for the Record, “Conversation with Marsh re: Harrington,” 24 February 1975.

⁷*The Washington Post*, 27 April 1975.

⁸CIA/OLC Journal, 28 April 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~); [redacted] Deputy Legislative Counsel, Memorandum for the Record, “Discussion with the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 1 May 1975,” 13 May 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret/Sensitive~~).

⁹*Washington Post*, 14 May 1975.

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By this time, many Congressmen had begun to criticize Nedzi for his failure to press the investigation of US intelligence more vigorously. Led by Michael Harrington, they charged that Nedzi, having been informed more than a year before of CIA assassination planning and improper domestic operations, had sat on that knowledge and done nothing. This led them to conclude that Nedzi was not the person to conduct a thorough and fair investigation of the CIA. Pressures on Nedzi to give up the chairmanship of the select committee mounted.

Colby became aware of Nedzi's troubles when he first showed up to testify to his committee on 12 June. Colby found that no meeting was going to take place, after all. Nedzi had just resigned his chairmanship, the Republican members of the committee had boycotted the hearing, and House Speaker Carl Albert had put the whole question of Nedzi's chairmanship on hold.¹⁰

Finally, on 17 July, 21 weeks after having supposedly begun its investigation of US intelligence, the House abolished Nedzi's committee and formed a new select committee, this time chaired by Otis Pike of New York. The House increased this committee's size by three members to 13. Although it also dropped Congressman Harrington, it retained all the former Nedzi committee staffers. Pike immediately announced that his committee would investigate the fiscal aspects of CIA but would leave the field of political assassination to the Senate's Church committee.

Otis Pike's prior record betrayed little indication of the erratic, indeed bizarre, manner in which he was to conduct the House's investigation of US intelligence. He was a wholly establishment Congressman—a magna cum laude graduate of Princeton, a World War II Marine Corps captain who had won five air medals flying 120 combat missions in the South Pacific, and a man who had been steadily reelected to Congress from a conservative district since 1960. That he conducted his committee in a raucous manner is a judgment widely shared, and the House of Representatives ultimately repudiated him by refusing to publish his committee's report.

Virtually all CIA officers who dealt with Pike and his committee became sharply critical of it. Colby considered the committee "a disaster,"¹¹ its chairman "a jackass,"¹² and its staff a "ragtag, immature, and publicity-seeking" group, a "bunch of children who were out to seize the most sensational high ground they could" and who were not interested in a serious review of what intelligence is really all about.¹³

¹⁰*The Washington Star*, 11 June 1975; CIA/OLC Journal, 12 June 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Confidential~~).

¹¹Colby interview by Ford, 3 February 1987

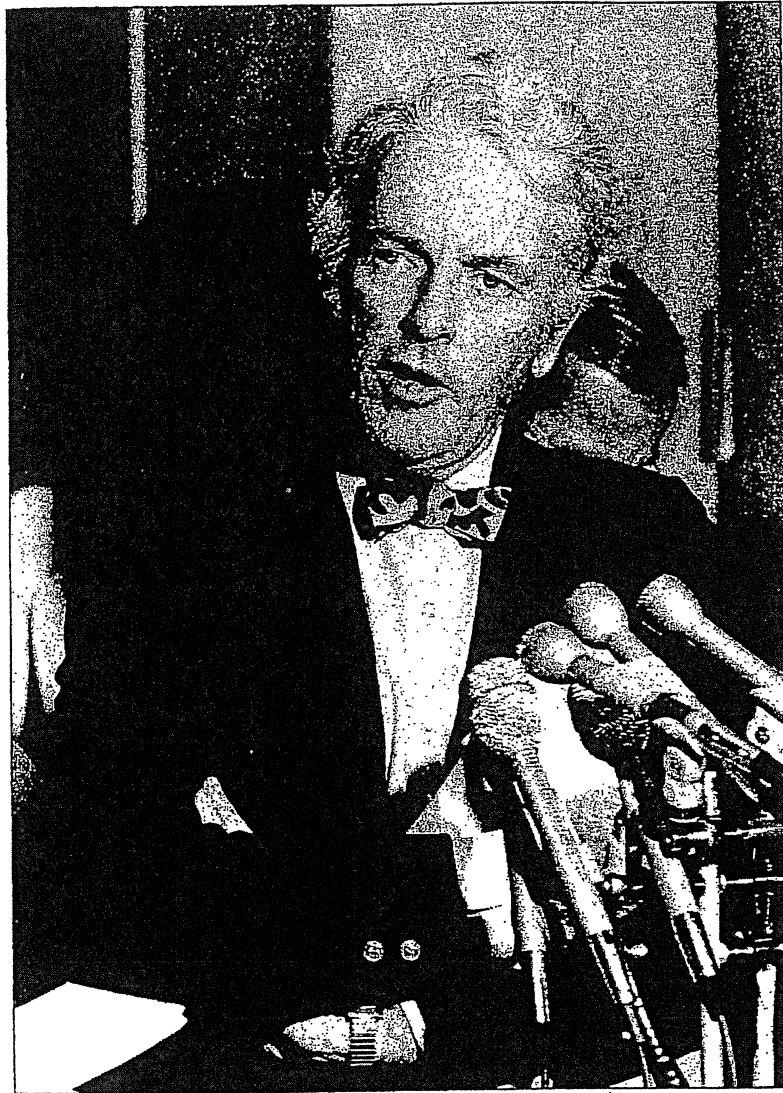
¹²Colby interview by [redacted] 15 March 1988.

¹³Colby, *Honorable Men*, pp. 431-432.

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The Pike Committee



Representative Otis Pike

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DO officer Donald Gregg, CIA's liaison with Pike's committee, confided at the time to the author that "at various times during my DO career some of my colleagues have considered me a dangerous liberal; but now, in the eyes of the Pike committee staffers, I'm a Fascist beast."¹⁴ Later, Gregg recalled that the months he had spent with the Pike committee "were the toughest I ever put in with the Agency." The committee staff had been instructed to make the Agency look bad, Gregg later recalled Pike staffer Tina Yamamoto confiding in him. "We were trying to embarrass you," Yamamoto told him, "and what we found was so different from what we expected that we were turned around by it. . . . As we came to know the Agency, it was the best outfit we'd ever seen. But the marching orders were to tear it apart."¹⁵

Other CIA officers agreed with Colby's and Gregg's assessments. Mitchell Rogovin, Colby's Special Counsel, considered Pike "a real prickly guy and a pain in the ass to deal with."¹⁶ DO officer John Waller felt the Pike committee staffers were "a bunch of juveniles, a miserable bunch . . . frivolous as well as antagonistic and hostile and savage sometimes."¹⁷ [redacted] considered them "flower children . . . sort of running barefoot down the halls, literally barefoot, on occasion."¹⁸ Agreeing with this view, DDI Edward Proctor confided to the author at the time that "a Pike committee staffer came to my office to interview me. She had on blue jeans that had been cut off at the calf and shredded, and she was barefoot. I told her to go home and put on her shoes and come back; then we could have our talk."¹⁹ In the view of DO officer Walter Elder, the committee's staffers "were really irresponsible and goaded by some sort of drive to make trouble, and terribly inexperienced and naive." Pike, he adds, "was almost a madman [who] ranted and raved."²⁰ And DDS&T Carl Duckett later recalled that the committee's security officer "was a 23-year-old young lady who had had no prior security experience. . . . She took classified waste home with her every night and disposed of it by throwing it down the incinerator chute in her apartment."²¹

Colby's rocky relationship with the Nedzi-Pike staff began even before the Pike committee was formed, when staff chief Searle Field publicly accused the Agency of having secretly infiltrated CIA officers into

¹⁴Donald Gregg, conversation with Harold P. Ford, circa 1975.

¹⁵Donald Gregg, interview by [redacted] tape recording, Washington, DC, 17 December 1987 (hereafter cited as Gregg interview by [redacted] 17 December 1987) (~~Secret~~).

¹⁶Rogovin interview by [redacted] 21 December 1987.

¹⁷Waller interview by [redacted] 11 December 1987.

¹⁸Edward Proctor, conversation with Harold P. Ford, circa 1976.

¹⁹Elder interview by [redacted] 17 September 1987.

²¹Duckett interview by [redacted] 4 January 1988.

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sensitive positions in the White House. Colby at once told the press that this was "outrageous nonsense."²²

Meanwhile, in contrast to Congressman Nedzi's glacierlike pace, Pike moved his troops out smartly once he had been named chairman. At the Select Committee's first hearing on 31 July US Comptroller Elmer B. Staats testified that his agency, the General Accounting Office (GAO), had no idea how much money the CIA spent or whether its management of that money was effective or wasteful. Chairman Pike then declared that the laws permitting secret budgeting for the CIA were unconstitutional.²³ At Colby's first appearance before the Committee on 4 August he refused to testify publicly on the intelligence budget but offered to answer all questions in executive session. Although Pike at once complained that CIA and the White House were withholding information essential to his committee, he did agree to a closed session.²⁴

In the closed session that followed (on 6 August), Colby testified at length. He gave the Committee a general rundown of CIA financial policies and procedures, termed "nonsense" the allegation that the CIA had secretly infiltrated other government agencies—this time charged by one of the committee's members, Representative Robert Kasten (R-WI), and denied that CIA had tried to destabilize Allende's government in Chile. Colby did admit that NSA had occasionally monitored the overseas telephone conversations of Americans.²⁵

As the summer wore on, the Pike committee sought enormous amounts of material from CIA. It subpoenaed documents to learn what intelligence the Agency had given the White House concerning the 1973

²²*The Washington Post*, 10 July 1975. This created quite a public flap at the time. Colby later learned that Field had made this charge after seeing a sanitized version of a memorandum Colby had used to brief Congressman Nedzi; Field interpreted a phrase, "people were detailed," to mean "people were tailed" (OLC Journal item, 9 July 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center [~~Confidential~~], CIA Files). As Walt Elder later recounted this episode, he said to Nedzi, "Congressman, you've been in the military service; you know when you're detailed what it means." Then Elder said, "Wait a minute. How old are your staffers?" Nedzi replied, and Elder said, "They've never had military service. Do me a favor. Go back and ask them what they understand by 'detailed.' He did and he came back and had this big grin on his face, just shaking his head sheepishly and he said, 'They think it means to tail somebody.'" (Elder interview by [redacted] 17 September 1987).

Article I, Section 9 of the US Constitution states that "a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public monies shall be published from time to time."

²³Here, at the outset of its existence, Pike's group displayed the obduracy that would mark its entire life: rather than negotiate for desired documents, as the Senate's Church committee was doing at the time, the Pike committee voted unanimously, 5 August, to subpoena certain desired data from the executive branch.

²⁴An insight into Pike's chairmanship at this juncture: Colby's Special Counsel, Mitchell Rogovin, recorded that, with respect to a recent letter the chairman had sent CIA, "I spoke with [staff chief] Searle Field this afternoon and he assures me that the letter was written last Friday 'in a drunken stupor'" (Rogovin, Memorandum for Chief, CIA Review Staff, 11 August 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center [~~Secret~~]).

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Arab-Israeli war, the Viet Cong's 1968 Tet offensive, the Turkish invasion of Crete, and the 1974 military coup in Portugal. In so doing, the committee insisted that it had the authority to declassify intelligence materials unilaterally.

[REDACTED]

This particularly erratic conduct on the part of the committee provoked an immediate, strong response from the White House and placed Pike on a collision course with the executive branch. On 12 September, President Ford ordered that Pike's committee be cut off from all classified documents and forbade administration officials to testify before that panel. On behalf of the President, Assistant Attorney General Rex Lee read a statement to Chairman Pike that held that:

The President's responsibilities for the national security and foreign relations of the United States leave him no alternative but to direct all departments and agencies of the Executive Branch respectfully to decline to provide the Select Committee with classified materials, including testimony and interviews which disclose such materials, until the Committee satisfactorily alters its position.²⁷

Paralleling this White House toughness, Colby held a press conference the same day, 12 September, at which he warned that the disclosure of the highly sensitive four words would have a "grave" effect on US intelligence capabilities. Meanwhile, Colby's Review Staff (which handled the Congressional committees' requests for documents), in a report to him of 22 September, characterized the House group's requests as "silly," its staff as ignorant of the Agency, and its requested deadlines as laughably impossible.²⁸ Expanding on this latter point, the Review Staff pointed out that a Pike committee request on 4 August included among its desired 11 items the following:

- A list of the total (aggregate) value of all of the [CIA] proprietaries as of each of the years since the Agency was founded.
- A list of all compartments established for security reasons, ranked so as to indicate which compartments are within other compartments, and indicating what kind of operation is hidden by the compartment.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Chief, Review Staff, Memorandum for William Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, "Material for Intelligence Coordinating Group," 22 September 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 33, CIA Archives and Records Center (Secret).

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- All memos to the Comptroller, from the components in the Agency, about "reprogramming" and "notices of eminent (*sic*) action."

A note at the end of this letter said, "Today, if possible."²⁹

Despite the displeasure of the White House and Colby, the Pike committee did not budge from the position that it had the right unilaterally to declassify any executive documents it pleased. On 25 September, it went so far as to charge that the White House was in "contempt of Congress" for refusing to provide the classified information the committee had requested.³⁰ The next day, the President and Secretary of State Kissinger met with House leaders to work out some solution to the standoff, but to no avail. On the 28 September CBS-TV "Face the Nation" program, Pike repeated his earlier claim that the House had the right to declassify documents. He charged that US security agencies had become unwieldy bureaucracies, so "drowning in information" that they could not absorb intelligence and might not be able to warn the country in advance of an unexpected attack.

Although Pike continued to make heavy demands on Colby for sensitive CIA documents, despite President Ford's 12 September ban, Pike on 1 October finally accepted a compromise arrangement that Colby suggested and to which the President, committee members, and other members of Congress all agreed. This agreement in essence provided that the committee would not publish classified material without first giving the Intelligence Community an opportunity to review it. If there was any disagreement with respect to publication, the material would be referred to the President; if the President certified in writing that publication would be detrimental to the national security, the material would not be published. This agreement also provided for a judicial review, should the committee wish to contest the President's determination.³¹

Despite this agreement—and the opportunity it afforded Pike to proceed more responsibly—the committee continued to leak sensitive intelligence to the media. One of the most egregious leaks revealed that the panel had been examining the very highly classified question of US use of specially equipped submarines, manned by both Navy and intelligence agency personnel, to gather photographic, electronic, and other kinds of intelligence. Journalist John Crewdson wrote that his sources had confirmed that "some of these missions have been conducted within the 12-mile ocean frontier claimed by the Soviet Union." "On occasion," he

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*The New York Times*, 26 September 1975. On Pike's charge, journalist David Binder wrote that were an administration official found to be in contempt by the House, its Sergeant at Arms would hypothetically "be empowered to arrest the official and confine him in the Capitol basement" (*The Washington Post*, 28 September 1975).

³¹In Rogovin, testimony to the House committee on Standards of Official Conduct, 27 July 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~).

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continued, "submarines have escaped, sometimes narrowly, after colliding with hostile vessels and, in at least one case, running aground off the Soviet coast."³²

The White House was enraged all the more the next day, 30 October, when James Gardner, a State Department officer, told the committee that, between April 1972 and December 1974, the administration's secret 40 Committee had approved some 40 covert operations without actually holding a meeting, having made their decisions by telephone.³³ Gardner gave the committee the distinct impression that Kissinger had not bothered to get the President's approval for any but the most sensitive covert operations. Kissinger contradicted Gardner's testimony the next day, 31 October, assuring the committee that for years the President had personally approved every clandestine operation undertaken by US agents.³⁴ The Pike committee seized on these contradictory testimonies to complain that Kissinger had withheld certain sensitive, but uncongenial, intelligence items that legitimately should have been shared with other officers. Colby and CIA supported this charge, supplying the committee with documents that detailed earlier protests the Agency had made to the White House that Kissinger had held back intelligence on possible Soviet violations of the 1972 accords.³⁵

Testifying for the last time before the Pike committee on 12 December, Colby stoutly defended the need for selected covert operations and warned that the United States would be in danger if the revelations of CIA misdeeds should lead to a crippling of the US intelligence Community. "I hope in the 1990s," he said, "that we will not look back at 1975 and marvel at the naivete of the Americans of 1975 as we now marvel at the naivete of those in the 1920s." In unusually strong language for this generally soft-spoken DCI, Colby accused Congressman Pike of "frightening people" by saying that American intelligence was incapable of predicting an attack on the United States.³⁶

Finally, on 19-20 December the committee reneged on its commitments to the President by voting to unilaterally declassify and publish materials documenting earlier sensitive US covert operations in Angola and Italy. Colby immediately prepared a draft letter for the President to send to

³²*The New York Times*, 29 October 1975.

³³*The New York Times*, 31 October 1975.

³⁴*The Washington Post*, 1 November 1975. In the view of journalist George Lardner, this testimony of Kissinger's "demolished the theory of 'plausible deniability' that has so often served to insulate Presidents from past disclosures." Lardner added that, in this outing with the Pike group, Kissinger had encountered "some of the roughest questioning he has ever faced on Capitol Hill" (*The Washington Post*, 1 November 1975).

³⁵*The Washington Post*, 10 and 17 December 1975; *The New York Times*, 3 December 1975. This was an understandable (and legitimate) complaint for Colby to make, especially since by this time he knew that he was being replaced as DCI and, consequently, would not have to be overly concerned with the formidable Dr. Kissinger's reaction.

³⁶*The Baltimore Sun*, 13 December 1975.

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Pike. Strongly protesting the committee's action, Colby urged Ford to certify "that you oppose these public disclosures as detrimental to the national security."³⁷

The strains between the committee and the executive branch rose dramatically three days later, on 23 December, when news arrived that terrorists had murdered Richard Welch, CIA's Chief of Station in Athens. Colby at once sent House Speaker Carl Albert a sharp letter citing the DCI's statutory responsibility "for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure." Colby told the Speaker that he was "greatly concerned" about the extent to which the DCI should continue to provide committees of Congress with sensitive information, adding—in an obvious reference to the Pike committee—that he was "equally concerned with respect to such information already in the custody of various committees of the Congress."³⁸

Welch's murder definitely strengthened Colby's hand in his battle with the Pike committee. On 15 January 1976, President Ford finally accepted Colby's 20 December recommendation that the White House not approve release of the Pike committee's report. The President told Pike that, in accordance with their earlier agreement on clearance procedures, "the publication at this time of these documents would be detrimental to the national security." Mr. Ford added that the documents and the testimony the committee had received on these issues made it possible for it to draw up an informed, final report, "without revealing the existence of, or details concerning, programs that should, in the national interest, remain unacknowledged."³⁹

On 19 January 1976, the Pike committee sent Colby the first draft of its final report, some 338 pages, requesting immediate CIA review and approval. Mitchell Rogovin at once sent Pike a negative response. Noting that the committee had been in a position to prepare a thorough report that would give the American public "the first real opportunity" to learn about intelligence, Rogovin observed that, although CIA had anticipated some critical comment, it had not expected a "total lack of balance." To Rogovin, the report appeared to be an unrelenting indictment couched in biased, pejorative, and factually erroneous terms, which in the end would "severely limit the report's impact, credibility and the important work of your Committee."⁴⁰

³⁷William Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, letter to White House Counselor John Marsh (with attachments), 20 December 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~).

³⁸William Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, letter to Speaker Carl Albert, 24 December 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (Unclassified).

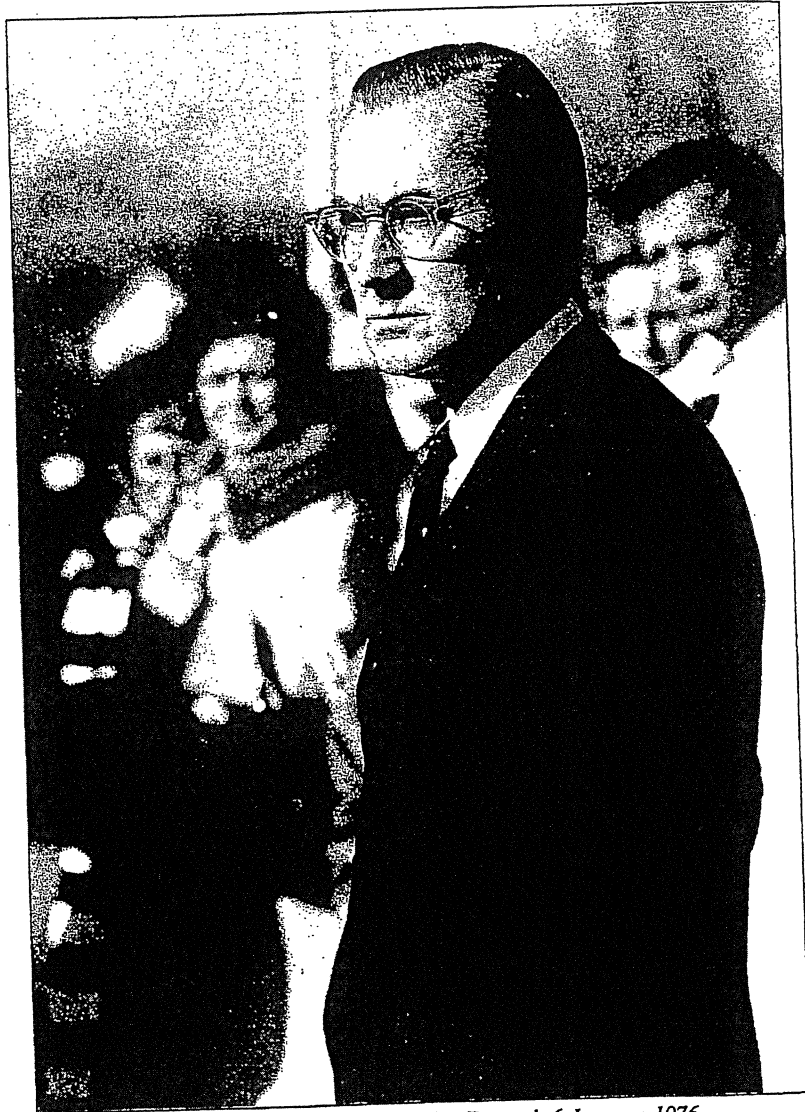
³⁹President Gerald Ford, letter to Chairman Otis Pike, 15 January 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (Unclassified).

⁴⁰Mitchell Rogovin, letter to Chairman Otis Pike, 20 January 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (Unclassified).

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Colby attending Richard Welch's Funeral, 6 January 1976

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The day after CIA received the Pike committee's draft report, portions of it appeared in *The New York Times*, directly violating assurances the committee had given Colby and the President. According to the *Times*, the committee's report not only mentioned the US Navy's submarine intelligence operations, but also criticized the Agency's past performance in such places as Angola, Cyprus, and Kurdish Iraq-Iran, and in such situations as the USSR's 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia, the 1973 Middle East war, and the 1974 coup in Portugal. CIA's accounting arrangements with the Office of Management and Budget also drew fire, as did alleged CIA expenditures "to provide kings with female companions and to pay people with questionable reputations to make pornographic movies for blackmail."⁴¹

Following these disclosures, Colby made numerous attempts to deflect the committee's rush to publish its full report. The committee ignored his efforts, however, and, on 23 January 1976, voted 9 to 7 to release its report to the public.

Three days later, on 26 January, Colby called another press conference, his last before turning over his DCI responsibilities to George Bush. At this conference, Colby denounced the Pike committee for neither keeping its secrets nor abiding by its pledges to the executive branch. Colby termed its draft report "totally biased and a disservice to our nation, giving a thoroughly wrong impression of American intelligence." He charged that, by selective use of the evidence, as well as by innuendo and suggestive language, the report implied that intelligence had deceptive budgets, had no accountability, and had not complied with one direct order of a President. Colby flatly denied the committee's charges.⁴²

In the end, however, the Pike committee did not prevail. On 28 January, two days after Colby's press conference, the House of Representatives took the unprecedented action of killing one of its own committee's reports. Following a 9-to-7 vote by the House Rules Committee against allowing the report to be published, the full House supported that decision by a wide margin, 246 to 124.

At this same juncture, CIA and the Pike committee exchanged their last broadsides, ending their relations on a very sour note. On 27 January, Rogovin sent the committee a scorching letter refuting a claim by committee staff chief Field that the administration had leaked the Pike report to the press. Rogovin, calling attention to the fact that *The New York Times* had stated that its excerpts were based directly on sources within the committee, accused Pike's staff of having stolen a copy of the [Ted Shackley] memorandum outlining the sensitive meeting of CIA officers with Senator "Scoop" Jackson in May 1973, which had concerned Senator Church's

⁴¹John Crewdson, in *The New York Times*, 20 January 1976.

⁴²NBC television "Nightly News," 26 January 1976.

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probe of ITT, CIA, and Chile.⁴³ Said Rogovin: "A copy of that memorandum is missing from a set of files to which one of your staffers had access [at CIA Headquarters] in early December. We suggest that you may wish to determine for yourself how your staff procured the document and how the report was leaked to the press."⁴⁴ The committee's staff director, A. Searle Field, responded with equal vigor, accusing Colby of having broken the earlier committee-CIA-White House agreement on prior review, and of having used "innuendo without facts." Field closed his letter with this needle: that he believed the author of *The New York Times* article on the committee's report, John Crewdson, "to be an honorable man, not in the employ of the CIA."⁴⁵

This last exchange with the Pike committee heralded the end of Colby's tenure as DCI. At the 30 January swearing in of the new DCI, George Bush, Otis Pike was invited but did not attend, while Senate Chairman Frank Church was not invited.⁴⁶

Retrospect on the Pike Committee

Chairman Pike expressed his regret that his committee's report had been leaked to the press, explaining that, because his colleagues on the committee had assumed the report would become public, they had made "no effort to maintain tight security." In fact, in his view the leaking of the report "distracted all eyes" from what the committee was trying to accomplish and created "a disaster." Pike remained convinced, however, that unlike the Church committee, his group had asked the right question: Is US intelligence any good? And his committee's answer, he told a *New York Times* interviewer, was that CIA had done a "lousy job."⁴⁷

Some of the committee's efforts had merit. Pike and his colleagues did raise some of the right questions. Many of the issues they addressed were more relevant to the central purposes of intelligence than was the Senate Church committee's pursuit of headlines. The Pike group's examination of the accuracy of past intelligence analyses and estimates was a wholly legitimate initiative. And, in the end, the committee disagreed with Senator Church's early charge that the CIA was a rogue elephant. The final Pike report (as leaked to the *Village Voice*) held that "all evidence in hand suggests that the CIA, far from being out of control, has been utterly responsive to the instructions of the President and the Assistant to the

⁴³Discussed in chapter 8, above.

⁴⁴Mitchell Rogovin, letter to Chairman Otis Pike, 27 January 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (Unclassified).

⁴⁵A. Searle Field, letter to Mitchell Rogovin, 28 January 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center (Unclassified).

⁴⁶According to journalist Laurence Stern, *The Washington Post*, 31 January 1976.

⁴⁷Shirley Elder interview of Otis Pike, as quoted in *The New York Times*, 10 October 1975.

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~~Secret~~*The Pike Committee*

President for National Security Affairs." According to CIA's John Waller, Pike was in effect accusing CIA of "being a supine elephant, not a rogue elephant."⁴⁸

It was the Pike committee's irresponsible pursuit of these aims that caused its investigation to crash, and the House of Representatives' purposes to be left unfulfilled. The committee could have made useful contributions had it gone about its work constructively. The trouble was that the committee entered upon its examination of the Intelligence Community's analyses and estimates, as indeed it did with its entire scrutiny of US intelligence, with fiercely held preconceptions that the Intelligence Community, the CIA in particular, was no damn good. Pike and his colleagues made little effort to examine issues in perspective or to point out positive aspects of US intelligence. His committee gave Colby and the Agency little if any credit for having themselves already corrected most of the alleged past illegalities. Pike's committee squandered an opportunity to show up its rival Senate investigative group and, more important, to advance the cause of more thorough Congressional oversight of US intelligence. That oversight eventually evolved in later years, we owe to the more constructive manner in which the subsequent permanent intelligence committees of the House and the Senate behaved. But this occurred despite, not because of, the work of the Pike and Church committees, those two efforts clearly damaged US intelligence, as well as American public regard for intelligence.

What is less clear is *why* Mr. Pike's group behaved as it did. The many examples of erratic conduct by the committee and its chairman remain mysteries that available documentation and interviews do not clearly illuminate. There is no mystery, however, about why the Pike committee suffered such setbacks in its final months. Some of these difficulties were self-inflicted; others, the result of outside developments. Pike's failure to allow the President and CIA to review his report in advance discredited him in the eyes of a substantial number of Congressmen. His committee's irresponsible behavior had a similar effect on public opinion, which had already begun to sour on the Church committee's headline hunting—especially because of Senator Church's announcement that he was, after all, going to run for president. The murder of CIA's Richard Welch—and the way in which Colby and President Ford dramatized that tragedy to the benefit of US intelligence—hardened opinion against overzealous Congressional probes. In addition, knowledge that the President had begun work on an Executive order on intelligence (which we discuss in the next chapter) to some degree beat Congress to the punch in prescribing reforms for CIA and the Intelligence Community. Nevertheless, the House's immediate reason for rejecting the Pike report almost certainly stemmed

⁴⁸John Waller, "The Myth of the Rogue Elephant Interred," *Studies in Intelligence* 22 (summer 1978): p. 2 (~~Secret~~).

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from its unauthorized appearance, this time in its entirety, in the 25 January *New York Times*. Not only did this version of the report contain materials not included in the prior drafts shown CIA, but it also contained a committee finding that, in 1973, Senator Henry Jackson had secretly advised the CIA on how to protect itself from an investigation by Senator Frank Church (discussed in chapter 8, above).⁴⁹

Even though CIA's relationships with the Pike committee were more acrimonious than those with the Church committee the House's inquiry was not as personally injurious to Colby. At the end, the Pike committee's erratic conduct, especially in leaking its report to the press, clearly worked to Colby's advantage. But by that time, the Church committee's sensational TV hearings, its emphases on assassination, dart guns, and other alleged CIA illegalities, had heavily influenced the public's image of the CIA.

Whether one is a supporter or critic of Colby's greater openness with Congress, it is difficult to fault him for the manner in which he dealt with the Pike committee. Colby was tough and forthright throughout. He was responsive to legitimate requests but staunchly protected intelligence sources and methods. Finally, his handling of the Pike committee is the more notable because it did not take place in a vacuum, but amidst heavy requirements not only from the Rockefeller and Church investigations, but also from other intelligence demands, worldwide.

⁴⁹John Crewdson, *The New York Times*, 26 January 1976; Mitchell Rogovin testimony to the House committee on Standards of Official Conduct, 9 March and 27 July 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center. Shortly after Colby left office, journalist Daniel Schorr gave a copy of the leaked Pike report to the *Village Voice*, which published it in full on 16 February 1976 under the title, "The Report on the CIA that President Ford Doesn't Want You To Read." Later, Mitchell Rogovin testified that that text of the Pike report contained some 88 differences from the version the committee had provided the CIA for review in January (as above) (Rogovin, testimony to the House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, 27 July 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 39, CIA Archives and Records Center [~~Secret~~]). In 1977, Spokesman Books published the *Village Voice's* version of the Pike committee's report; that edition contains an introduction by Philip Agee.

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~~Secret~~*Chapter 12***Other Slings and Arrows of 1975**

Already under heavy fire from the Rockefeller, Church, and Pike investigations, Colby was hit by a barrage of other demands throughout the last year of his DCI incumbency. Many of these were probes by other Congressional figures, the most trying of which was that of Congresswoman Bella Abzug. Still other demands resulted from routine DCI responsibilities, followups to Schlesinger and Colby initiatives, or particular world developments that pushed CIA and US intelligence to the forefront.

Colby and Bella Abzug

Interviewer: What was your low point in the Congressional hearings?

Colby: Bella Abzug.

Colby, March 1988¹

I really got sore. I told her we were not having a reasonable discussion. I also told her that if she visited such [terrorist] people abroad, such enemies of the United States, there was no way that I was going to keep her name out of our records. Also, she was one of the last delegations to visit South Vietnam, where she was rude to the GVN officials and spent all her time with opposition groups.

Colby, August 1988²

Colby's relationships with Bella Abzug, and with the Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, House Government Operations Committee, that she chaired, were even more acrimonious than those with the Pike committee. The friction began in January 1975 when the House Government Operations Committee asked Colby to testify on its upcoming Privacy Act bill. Chairman William S. Moorhead (D-PA) was

¹Colby interview by [redacted] 15 March 1988.

²Colby interview by Ford, 9 August 1988.

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sympathetic to CIA's purposes and its need for secrecy. Not so Congresswoman Abzug, who—despite Colby's assurances to the contrary—charged that the Agency was continuing to launch activities against domestic "peace groups," destroy files it improperly held on American citizens, illegally open US mails, and conduct other illicit activities within the United States. She also wished to investigate allegations that the CIA had had drug ties in Thailand to one Phuttaphon Khrankhruan—ties she believed should be made public, whatever Colby's responsibilities were for protecting intelligence sources and methods. Congresswoman Abzug's chief grievance against the CIA, however, was that it had maintained surveillance over certain of her own activities abroad.

Colby suggested that Abzug take her complaints to Congressman Lucien Nedzi, soon to become chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, and sit in on the hearings of that group.³ Not satisfied with Colby's response, she proceeded to conduct her own probes of CIA activities—which gave Colby a bad time for months.⁴ Weeks and weeks of sparring ensued between her subcommittee and CIA, complete with repeated requests for sensitive Agency documents, often with overnight deadlines. After first checking with White House Counsels John Marsh and Philip Buchen, Colby gave her only certain of these documents. His action evoked a complaint in October 1975 from Representative Jack Brooks (D-TX), who had succeeded William S. Moorhead as chairman of the House Committee on Government Operations, that such partial compliance was "offensive to the dignity of a member of Congress."⁵

Colby appeared twice before Abzug's subcommittee, on 5 March and 25 June. At the first of these outings, as he later recalled:

I went down there and we spent the whole goddamn day. She was outraged that we had her name in our files. I finally said, "Mrs. Chairman, if you go visit the headquarters of a foreign group whose soldiers are shooting our soldiers and vice versa, there is no way I am going to keep your name out of the CIA files, no way. And that is why we have your name in the files because you went to see the PRG headquarters in Paris or associated with other people abroad."⁶

[redacted] Assistant Legislative Counsel, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting or the Director with Chairman William S. Moorhead (D-PA) and other members of the House Government Operations Committee regarding Privacy Act of 1974," 23 January 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 45, CIA Archives and Records Center

~~Internal Use Only.~~

³One of the members of Abzug's subcommittee was Congressman Michael Harrington who, it will be recalled, was then bringing suit against the CIA, charging that it had exceeded its statutory authority by undertaking illicit surveillance activities. In the end, on 3 July 1975, the court dismissed his suit for lack of standing and as a nonjustifiable political question.

[redacted] Deputy Legislative Counsel, Memorandum for the Record, "Conversation With Chairman Jack Brooks, House Government Operations Committee, re Phuttaphon Khrankhruan Material," 6 October 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 45, CIA Archives and Records Center ~~(Internal Official Use).~~

⁶Colby interview by [redacted] 15 March 1988.

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At his second appearance before her subcommittee, Colby told Abzug that, because of the DCI's responsibilities to protect intelligence sources and methods, it was essential that the Agency be exempted from the public disclosure obligations of the Privacy Act. And, on a later occasion, after CIA's Deputy Legislative Counsel, [] had explained the Agency's need to delete sensitive names and details from documents provided her subcommittee, she angrily charged that this was an affront to her dignity and an infringement on her absolute right to information as a member of Congress. According to [] "Abzug's forceful counter added up to the Agency being an illegal monster, and I told her I personally and officially resented that characterization. . . . I also told her that, if my presence in the room was offensive to her, perhaps we could make other arrangements." When she responded that she had the right to bring individuals before her subcommittee whose identities the CIA was trying to protect, [] told her he could not believe that she would undertake an action that would compromise the identity of an Agency employee serving under unofficial cover in a foreign state. She told [] "not to be so sure on that score."⁷ In the end, Colby prevailed on this issue: Chairman Jack Brooks reluctantly accepted a compromise arrangement, and the DCI provided Mrs. Abzug's subcommittee the documents it wanted but with sensitive details deleted.

Other Congressional Investigations

By mid-1975, appearances on the Hill had become a pervasive aspect of my job as DCI, and I was going up there to report on every new step taken in the Angola, Kurdish, and other covert operations under way as well as testifying on practically everything the CIA had ever done during the last three decades to the Select Committees investigating intelligence. Sadly, the experience demonstrated that secrets, if they are to remain secret, cannot be given to more than a few Congressmen—*every* new project subjected to this procedure during 1975 leaked and the "covert" part of CIA's covert action seemed almost gone.

Colby, 1978⁸

In addition to the Abzug, Church, and Pike investigations, and over and above Congressional concerns with routine intelligence matters, the Agency was the target of still other Capitol Hill probes. During 1975, Colby appeared before seven additional committees or subcommittees of

[] Deputy Legislative Counsel, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting With Representative Bella Abzug (D-NY) re Phuttaphon Khramkhruan," 7 October 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 45, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Internal Use Only~~).

⁸Colby, *Honorable Men*, p. 423.

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the Senate, and four of the House. These probes covered a wide range of issues—including Chile, CIA drug experimentation, CIA use of missionaries as intelligence sources, and new Congressional oversight proposals.

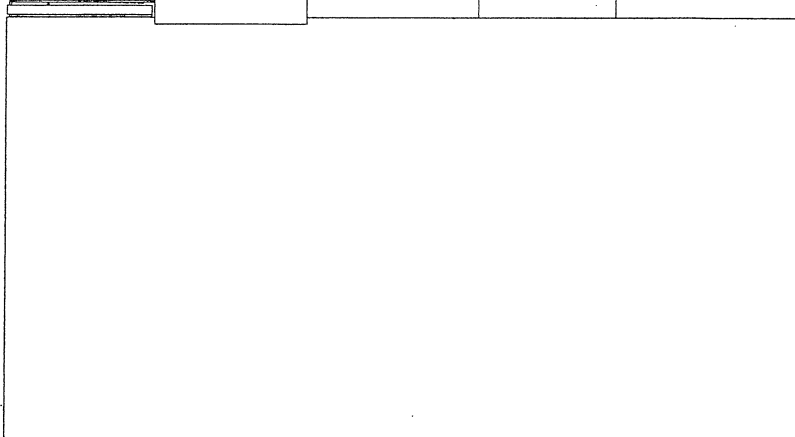
Meanwhile, many other worldwide demands pressed in on CIA and Colby during his last year. The principal issues were Angola, the fall of South Vietnam, the Glomar Explorer, and Soviet advanced weapons progress.

Angola

The successful establishment of a pro-Soviet regime in Angola would have a great impact on [African] leaders. . . . Many of them must adjust to changing realities and would see advantage in accommodation with rather than opposition to the Soviets.

CIA Summary of Meeting With Senator Dick Clark (D-IA), October 1975⁹

Of all CIA's [redacted] issues in 1975, Angola made the greatest demands on Colby's time and attention.¹⁰ He was heavily engaged on this issue within CIA, with White House officials and Henry Kissinger, with developments in the field, and—not least—with substantial criticism from Capitol Hill [redacted]



[redacted] Chief, Africa Division/DO, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting With Senator Dick Clark," 4 October 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 46, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret Eyes Only~~).

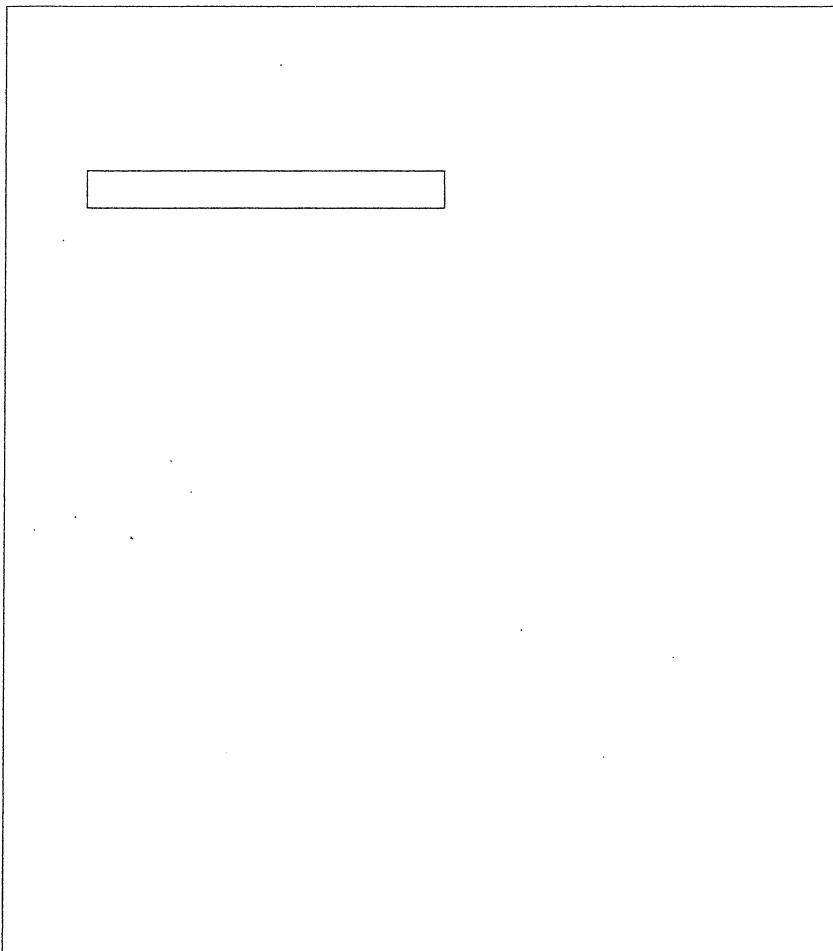
⁹In 1975, fierce fighting broke out in Angola between three black liberation groups competing to succeed Portuguese authority: the Communist-backed MPLA (The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola); the FNLA (The National Front for the Liberation of Angola), headed by Holden Roberto; and UNITA (The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), headed by Jonas Savimbi.

¹⁰William Colby, DCI, closed session testimony to the Pike committee, 23 October 1975, pp. 2963-2964 and 2972-2974, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret/Sensitive~~).

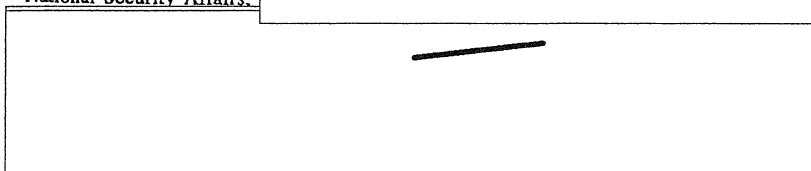
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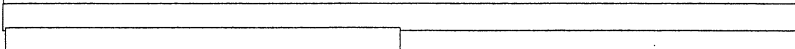
Other Slings and Arrows



¹²William Colby, DCI, Memorandum for Henry Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.



William E. Nelson, Deputy Director for Operations, backs up to William Colby, DCI, re

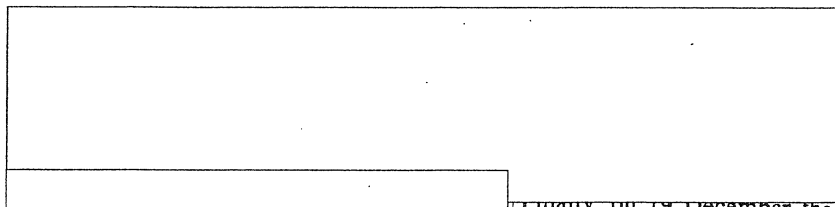


ibid.

¹³William Colby, DCI, letter to Senator John Sparkman, 10 November 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 46, CIA Archives and Records Center (Unclassified).

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January, on 19 December the Senate voted (54 to 22) to cut off additional funds for Savimbi and Roberto, and, on 27 January 1976, the House of Representatives, brushing aside President Ford's last-minute plea, voted 323 to 99 to cut off all further aid to these Angolan groups. Having backed a losing cause, Colby sustained yet another personal setback.

The Fall of South Vietnam

Today, Americans can regain the sense of pride that existed before Vietnam. But it cannot be achieved by refighting a war that is finished.

President Gerald Ford, April 1975¹⁷

The logistics of evacuation in Vietnam were staggering. . . . The potential victims of a Communist takeover numbered, in addition to six thousand Americans, more than a hundred thousand Vietnamese now or formerly employed by various American agencies—who, with their kin, swelled the total to nearly a million. . . . The imminent danger was that frenzied government troops might massacre the Americans and their Vietnamese cohorts to prevent them from departing.

Stanley Karnow, 1983¹⁸

Over and above the other problems that swamped Colby in his last year as DCI, he faced the sudden collapse of South Vietnam, perhaps the greatest military/foreign policy defeat in US history. In the last weeks of the Saigon government's life—from its armies' collapse in the face of the major enemy offensive that began on 1 March 1975, to the Communist forces' entry into Saigon on 30 April—Colby's responsibilities were many and demanding. He gave US policymakers estimates concerning enemy

¹⁶William Colby, DCI, Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, [redacted], 8 December 1975, (~~Secret/Sensitive Eyes Only~~); William Colby, DCI, memorandum for Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State, "Angola Special Report No. 4," 24 December 1975, (~~Secret/Sensitive Eyes Only~~); William Colby, DCI, Memorandum for Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State, "Situation Reports on Angolan Operations," 12 December 1975 (~~Secret/Sensitive Eyes Only~~); all three documents located in CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 46, CIA Archives and Records Center.

¹⁷From a speech at Tulane University, as cited in *The Washington Post*, 24 April 1975.

¹⁸Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Viking, 1983), pp. 666-667.

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capabilities and intentions. He was one of the major actors in the hectic US policy counsels (Washington Special Action Group) of those weeks, and he rejected a suggestion that the United States permit a last-moment, dissident coup attempt to oust South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu.¹⁹ Colby oversaw emergency efforts to evacuate Agency officers and great numbers of Vietnamese whose CIA connections gave them scant hope of survival in the wake of a Communist victory. "Vietnam kept me terribly busy at that time," Colby later recalled. "I spent most of April in WSAG meetings, talking about estimates of the situation, and evacuation planning."²⁰ These, of course, were the same weeks in which the Rockefeller and Church investigations were pressing Colby and the CIA.

By comparison with other US intelligence and policymaking officials, Colby did a relatively good job of estimating enemy capabilities and intentions, even though the initial intelligence estimates produced under his direction in early 1975 proved clearly overoptimistic.²¹ At first, Colby shared those views, but, in the last four weeks of South Vietnam's life, he became more pessimistic about Saigon's fate than most other US principals. Except for Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger and CIA's analytic offices, Colby was pretty much alone in voicing such dark estimates. By contrast, almost to the very end, much more optimistic expectations were held by the Department of State, DIA, Ambassador Graham Martin in Saigon, CIA's Saigon Chief of Station (COS) Polgar, and the chief of CIA's (DO) Far East Division, Ted Shackley (himself a former Saigon COS). Most important, however, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger held over-optimistic views until the very last. For example, on 10 April he rejected Colby's recommendation to accelerate the withdrawal of Americans and "high risk" Vietnamese. And, as late as 27 April, one day before the enemy began lobbing rockets into Saigon, and only three days before Saigon fell, Kissinger overrode arguments by Colby and others (at a WSAG meeting presided over by President Ford) to begin emergency evacuation by helicopters. One of the primary causes of Kissinger's optimism was a confidence widely shared in Washington and in the US

¹⁹In early April Saigon COS Thomas Polgar asked CIA Headquarters to consider the possibility that President Thieu might have to be removed if there were to be any hope of the Communists negotiating a surrender settlement with a new South Vietnamese Government. Colby immediately killed that idea: "I told them to stay away like poison from anything like that" (Colby interview by Ford, 9 August 1988).

²⁰Colby interview by Ford, 9 August 1988.

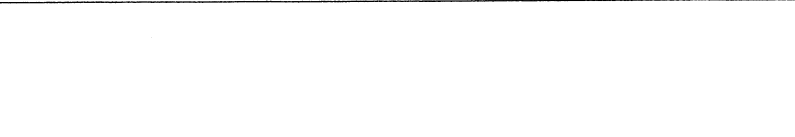
²¹For example, even after the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) military position in MR (Military Region) II had collapsed and thousands of refugees were streaming south, a Special National Intelligence Estimate of 27 March held that, although the loss of large parts of Military Regions I and II might prove permanent, South Vietnamese forces were strong enough to hold the new defense line north of Saigon that the South Vietnamese high command had in mind; and that the enemy offensive would in any event soon be slowed by impending bad weather (SNIE 53/14.3-75, *Assessment of Situation in South Vietnam*, 27 March 1975, ~~Secret~~).

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Embassy in Saigon that Democratic Republic of Vietnam-Viet Cong (DRV-VC) forces did not intend to launch an all-out military assault on Saigon but were willing to work out a negotiated settlement, provided the GVN first installed a new "peace" government. Kissinger and others who subscribed to such views believed that much more time was available to arrange an orderly withdrawal from Vietnam than was, in fact, the case.



late in the game, Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev also gave Washington somewhat similar assurances. As events turned out, Communist Vietnamese forces overran Saigon on 30 April.²³



Colby briefing White House senior policymakers on situation in South Vietnam, April 1975. Clockwise: Colby, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Ingersoll, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, President Gerald Ford, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Clements, Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, Chairman of the JCS Gen. George Brown.

²²The ICC in Vietnam included India, Hungary, Poland, and Canada.

²³On 23 April 1975, Brezhnev sent a note to President Ford stating that the North Vietnam-Viet Cong side had no intention of posing obstacles to an American evacuation and no desire to humiliate Washington.

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Other Slings and Arrows

Washington's spotty intelligence performance was not confined to the period before the fall of Saigon. During the weeks immediately thereafter, various senior American officials—including Colby—sought to put the best face on Washington's estimative record and on the field's success in evacuating US and US-related Vietnamese.

The Glomar Explorer

In 1979, [redacted] the Glomar Explorer's Deputy Mission Director, described the situation in March 1975, after news leaks about CIA's Glomar Explorer's earlier secret effort to raise a sunken Soviet submarine from the depths of the Pacific. The ship, he observed:

Was soon a fortress as local, regional and national news people poured into the Long Beach area. . . . Reporters frequented the Long Beach bars and tried all the arts and tricks of their trade to find knowledgeable sources and persuade them to talk. Waterfront hangers on were plied with drinks and prostitutes were enlisted in attempts to buy crew lists. Crew members were pestered, badgered and propositioned. . . . A few days prior to departure, the tax assessor of Los Angeles County slapped a tax lien on the ship for \$4,685,882.07. He had in effect seized the vessel and was going to put it up for sale at public auction on 27 August.²⁴

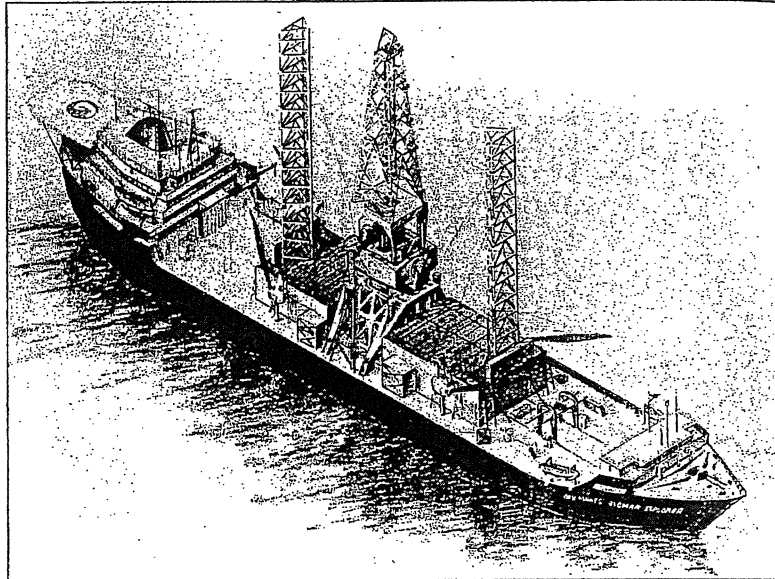
The ragged culmination of the Glomar Explorer operation, project AZORIAN, was yet another of Colby's many headaches in 1975. This imaginative, ambitious, and very expensive intelligence collection effort had begun years before, occasioned by the USSR's loss in the Pacific of one of its G-11 class ballistic submarines (to unknown causes) on 11 March 1968, some 1,560 miles northwest of Hawaii. This project was already under way when Colby came to office. In fact, when he was sworn in as DCI in September 1973, the Glomar Explorer was transiting the Strait of Magellan at the tip of South America, en route to California. A year later, in August 1974, Colby and project AZORIAN's managers got the heart-breaking news that [redacted] portion of the Soviet submarine had broken off during final efforts to raise it.²⁵

[redacted] "Security: Hidden Shield for Project AZORIAN," *Studies in Intelligence* 23 (winter 1979): pp. 47-49 (~~Secret~~). [redacted] was the Glomar Explorer's Deputy Mission Director.

²⁴Throughout, Colby delegated the operational direction of the project to [redacted]'s field managers. Looking back, [redacted] AZORIAN's Mission Director, noted his extreme gratitude for the advice and confidence he received from DCI William Colby, who had assured him that "the Mission Director . . . was to use his own good judgment in critical situations as long as he was adhering to the basic guidelines of the directives and plans that governed the operation." [redacted] reports that he took this advice "gratefully and literally" [redacted] Project AZORIAN: The Story of the Hughes Glomar Explorer," *Studies in Intelligence* 22 [autumn 1978]: p. 48 (~~Secret~~). [redacted] had been members of the AZORIAN operation).

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Colby centered most of his efforts on trying to keep this sensitive operation from being blown and on planning a second effort to raise the rest of the submarine. The problem of security leaks had begun in California in June 1974, when thieves had stolen documents from one of Howard Hughes's safes, some of which tied Hughes to CIA and the Glomar Explorer. The thief (or thieves) thereupon peddled this hot information to the media.

In early 1975, in the troubled setting created by Hersh's sensational charges against the CIA, Colby had to dissuade members of the media who had learned at least some details of AZORIAN from making the story public.²⁶ The first leak was printed by *The Los Angeles Times* in February 1975. "We briefed the Los Angeles Police Department on this," Colby recalls, "asking them to hold the line for us, but I think it was they who leaked the story to *The L. A. Times*."²⁷ The *Times* account was a garbled one, stating that CIA had attempted to recover a Soviet submarine from the depths of the *Atlantic* Ocean with a special ship Howard Hughes had built with US Government money. A few weeks later, on 18 March 1975, columnist Jack Anderson went on national television with a savage treatment of this project. According to Jack Anderson, CIA Director Colby

²⁶Recall that Seymour Hersh was one of those who had gotten word of AZORIAN, but had sat on the story at Colby's request—one of the main reasons Colby gave for having agreed to let Hersh interview him in December 1974.

²⁷Colby interview by Ford, 9 August 1988.

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"made a personal appeal to us [Anderson] not to publish the story." But Anderson said he went ahead and broadcast the report anyway because "Navy experts have told us that the sunken sub contains no real secrets and that the project, therefore, is a waste of the taxpayers' money." Anderson also said Colby's attempt to stop the report grew out of a motive "to cover up a \$350 million blunder."²⁸ Soon thereafter *The New York Times* ran a second account, [redacted]

It was these revelations by *The Los Angeles Times*, Jack Anderson, and *The New York Times* that let loose the circus-like developments at the Glomar Explorer's berth in Long Beach. These leaks, along with charges that the intelligence gained from AZORIAN had not been worth its great expense, played a major role in the White House decision to kill Colby's proposal for a second attempt to raise the Soviet submarine.

White House Pressure on CIA's Soviet Weapons Estimates

Whatever the merits of an adversary procedure . . . no one has ever suggested that adversaries seek to be wholly objective. . . . In view of the uneven distribution of debating skills, one cannot fail to have qualms about the probable outcomes. One senior official has observed, only half facetiously, that experience in debate is the most valuable training for analytical work.

James R. Schlesinger, April 1968²⁹

As evident in previous chapters, the question of Soviet strategic weapons progress had, for some years before 1975, evoked the greatest White House criticism of National Intelligence Estimates. During his tenure as DCI, Colby twice came under direct pressure with respect to estimates from the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB). The first occasion was in April 1974, when Adm. George W. Anderson, Jr. (USN, Ret.), the PFIAB's chairman, sent President Nixon a letter charging that the NIE 11-3/8 series was grossly underestimating Soviet ICBM progress, a view shared in particular by his PFIAB colleagues Edward Teller and John Foster.

In response, Colby got the Intelligence Community to agree that the USSR's leaders were unlikely to perceive themselves as approaching strategic superiority so long as US strategic weapons research and development programs continued vigorously. Colby thereupon told President

²⁸*The Washington Post*, 19 March 1975. [redacted]

²⁹James Schlesinger, "Uses and Abuses of Analysis," a memorandum prepared at the request of the Subcommittee on National Security and International Operations, Senate Committee on Government Operations, 1968, p. 2. At that time Schlesinger was Director of Strategic Studies at the RAND Corporation.

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Nixon that the Intelligence Community continued to believe, as they had most recently indicated (in NIE 11-8-73), that "under no foreseeable circumstances in the next 10 years are the Soviets likely to develop and deploy forces of the magnitude and quality necessary to reduce damage to themselves to acceptable levels by a first strike against US strategic forces."³⁰ At the same time, however, Colby directed the Intelligence Community to reexamine closely the specific technical questions the PFIAB had raised.³¹

PFIAB returned to the attack in the fall of 1975. This time PFIAB Chairman Anderson told President Ford that the latest NIE on the subject (11-3/8-74), was "seriously misleading" in the presentation of a number of its key judgments, and in "projecting a sense of complacency unsupported by the facts." As a consequence, said Anderson, the NIE "is deficient for the purposes it should serve."³² This time the White House proposed that Colby conduct an experiment in competitive intelligence analysis wherein the Intelligence Community and outside experts would prepare independent estimates of Soviet antisubmarine warfare capabilities and of Soviet ICBM accuracy.

Once again, Colby got the USIB to agree with him in giving the White House a polite "no." In letters to the President and to PFIAB Chairman Anderson, Colby argued that because the preparation of the current estimate on Soviet strategic weapons progress (NIE 11-3/8-75) was already far along, the best procedure would be for the White House to wait to examine the new NIE's findings, when it had been completed.³³ Colby recalls that on this occasion the PFIAB's members also believed that nuclear expert Albert Wohlstetter had raised some "devastating" questions in a recent set of articles on the NIEs and Soviet advanced weapons progress. Colby recalls that "I sent the PFIAB's views to CIA's DS&T for comment, but got back only a lot of gobbledegook. I then went to USIB and said, 'let's wait until the new NIE comes out and then see whether the PFIAB likes that one any better.' PFIAB didn't, as it turned out."³⁴

³⁰William Colby, DCI, Memorandum for President Nixon, "Report on the Strategic Threat by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board," 18 May 1974, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 4, folder 49, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~).

³¹Fritz Ermarth (a participant in these examinations at the time, and later, Chairman of the National Intelligence Council), interview by Harold P. Ford, summary notes, Washington, DC, 7 December 1988 (hereafter cited as Ermarth interview by Ford, 7 December 1988) (~~Secret~~).

³²As cited in William Colby, DCI, Memorandum for President Ford, "Possible Revisions in the NIE Process," 10 November 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 4, folder 49, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~).

³³William Colby, DCI, letter to Adm. George W. Anderson, Jr., USN (Ret.), 2 December 1975, (~~Confidential~~); William G. Hyland (for Brent Scowcroft's signature), Memorandum for Admiral Anderson, Chairman, President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, "PFIAB Recommendations for Revision of the NIE Process," 4 December 1975, (~~Secret~~), both documents are located in CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 4, folder 49, CIA Archives and Records Center.

³⁴Colby interview by Ford, 9 August 1988.

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Colby was supported at USIB by Maj. Gen. George Keegan, the Air Force's Intelligence Chief, even though Keegan strongly shared PFIAB's criticisms of the National Intelligence Estimates. Moreover, in late November, after President Ford had announced that he was replacing Colby, General Keegan wrote Colby:

I take great comfort that under your able aegis some independent judgments have been allowed. It has been a most noble start—and would that your even hand could be allowed to remain at the helm. Under your stewardship, the NIE process has improved markedly. For the first time in 23 years, our analysts are able to work together on something other than a feudal basis.³⁵

In 1976, following Colby's departure as DCI, the PFIAB made a third attempt—this time successfully—to get the Intelligence Community to agree to a competitive analysis exercise. The new DCI, George Bush, agreed to conduct such an experiment on three specific questions concerning Soviet advanced weapons. The result was the famous (or infamous) A Team-B Team episode.

President Ford's 1976 Executive Order on Intelligence

The President's initiative [in issuing an Executive order to reform the Intelligence Community] must be seen in its political perspective. . . . What the President has done, in effect, is to pull off a preemptive end-run of the Congress with the intelligence issue.

Journalist Crosby S. Noyes, February 1976³⁶

The scrutiny of CIA provoked by Seymour Hersh's charges and the Rockefeller, Church, and Pike investigations implied from the start that US intelligence needed formal reform. Progress toward such reform had two fathers: CIA and—subsequently—the White House, as a followup to its Rockefeller panel. For some months of 1975, these two offices explored possible reform packages, independently of one another. Then, in August, their two efforts began to interweave. The culmination of this process was President Ford's Executive order on US intelligence, issued on 18 February 1976, a few days after George Bush became DCI.

CIA played a major role in fashioning this Executive order. In several respects this Presidential directive was based on Colby's and his CIA colleagues' work in preparing what they termed their "Option X," and reflected much of Colby's own view of how US intelligence should be

³⁵Maj. Gen. George J. Keegan, Jr., USAF, letter to William Colby, DCI, 21 November 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 4, folder 49, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~).

³⁶*The Washington Post*, 24 February 1976.

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organized and controlled. Indeed, Colby himself had put considerable effort into this endeavor. Chronologically, CIA was first in the field; the administration did not begin work on an Executive order until six months later. CIA's interests started in late January 1975, just a month following Seymour Hersh's bombshell. On 27 January 1975, James Taylor, at the time CIA's Acting Comptroller, told Colby that, in addition to fighting the immediate crises involved in the several looming investigations of the Agency, "we should also begin now to consider possible changes for the future that may arise out of the current review." Taylor named four particular areas on which CIA should focus: the quality of its management, Congressional review of CIA's progress and budget, Executive review and control of the Agency, and the internal controls CIA should impose on itself.³⁷ Taylor and [redacted] (CIA's Acting General Counsel) subsequently polished these ideas, with the hope of eventually presenting them to Presidential Counsel John Marsh. In June, Taylor circulated proposed terms of reference for a special CIA study group tasked to give Colby its final draft by 2 September.³⁸

The first White House stirrings toward an Executive order began in August, their focus much broader than the initiatives CIA was taking. In early September, Henry Kissinger prepared a first draft on the many issues to be covered,³⁹ and on 19 September, President Ford established a formal White House body, headed by John Marsh, to prepare a formal Executive order on US intelligence. During October, Colby gave his own (Taylor-Greany) study to the President. Since Colby was on his way out by this time, the CIA's more modest "Option X" efforts toward an intelligence charter were quickly outgunned by the White House initiative for an Executive order.

In November, NSC officer Brent Scowcroft finally gave Colby (and other Washington principals) a copy of a draft Executive order, with a request for comments on it. Colby's responses were candid and fairly critical. Submitting them on 18 November, he held that the White House draft dealt

³⁷James Taylor, Acting Comptroller Memorandum for William Colby, DCI, "Future Reforms," 27 January 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~).

³⁸James Taylor, Deputy Comptroller buckslip for Secretary of the Management Committee, attached to "Terms of Reference: CIA Study Group," 11 June 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 48, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Administrative/Internal Use Only~~).

³⁹Maj. Gen. Jack E. Thomas, Chief, Coordination Staff, Intelligence Community Staff, Memorandum (plus attachments) for William Colby, DCI, "Proposed Executive Orders," 5 September 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 48, CIA Archives and Records Center. Colby was so isolated from the White House by this time that Kissinger and his colleagues did not give him a copy of their memorandum for the President. Neither Colby nor anyone else at CIA Headquarters saw it until 23 September, when George Carver, having learned of its existence from Gen. Daniel Graham of the IC Staff, sent Colby a bootleg copy he had winkled from Graham (attachment to George Carver, Memorandum for the DCI, "Memorandum on 'Implementation of Recommendations on Intelligence' sent to the President on 5 September," 23 September 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 48, CIA Archives and Records Center).

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too much with bits and pieces of the total problem and did not pull them together, that the White House draft should be amended to provide the DCI an independent analytical capability, that the draft did not adequately define the DCI's authority and responsibilities, and that the administration might wish to consider further options that encapsulated part of the "Option X" that Colby and other CIA officers had been developing.⁴⁰

On 6 January 1976, Colby gave the White House still more of his views on its draft Executive order. Colby's chief recommendations this time were that the executive branch ask Congress to consolidate its intelligence oversight activities, that the Intelligence Community's structure not be radically changed, and that the National Security Act of 1947 be amended specifically to authorize covert operations, that—to guard against leaks—only one Congressional committee be advised of such operations.⁴¹ Colby's recommendations are notable both because they reflect the considerable time and attention he gave such questions even as he was about to be replaced as DCI, and because the Executive order eventually incorporated several of them.

Other Alarms and Excursions of 1975

Bill Colby had been director of the CIA at a traumatic period in the agency's history. He had gone through hell and, in my opinion, done a splendid job. . . . He was on a hot seat before one committee after another. I supported his decision to tell the truth about past agency misdeeds even though both of us recognized that his testimony would be embarrassing. Colby was smart; he possessed both integrity and guts, and I liked and respected him very much. Yet this did not alter my conviction that the agency needed a change at the top.

Gerald R. Ford, 1979⁴²

In addition to the demands on him already examined in this study, Colby also had to wrestle with other challenges during his last year as Director. The most significant of these are briefly stated below.

The Mayaguez Rescue

On 12 May 1975, two weeks after the fall of Saigon, Cambodian forces fired upon and captured the US merchant ship Mayaguez in the Gulf of Siam, taking the crew's members to the small island of Koh Tang. After

⁴⁰William Colby, DCI, letter to James T. Lynn, Director, Office of Management and Budget (who at the time was also heading up the White House's task group preparing the Executive order), 18 December 1975, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 48, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Confidential~~).

⁴¹William Colby, DCI, letter to President Ford, 8 January 1976, CIA History Staff records, job 90B00336R, box 3, folder 48, CIA Archives and Records Center (~~Secret~~).

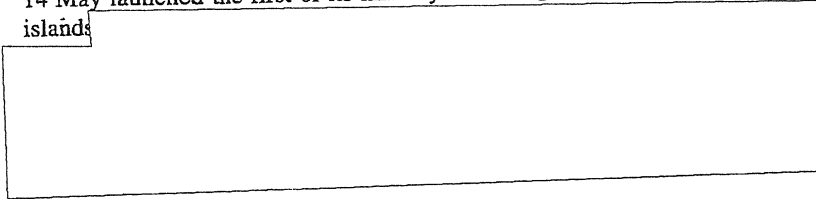
⁴²Gerald Ford, *A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 324-325.

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failing in its attempts to negotiate their release, the White House on 14 May launched the first of its military strikes against several Cambodian islands



Diego Garcia

During 1975, Colby was asked repeatedly for evaluations of the Soviet naval buildup in the Indian Ocean. This was an especially touchy question because analyses of Soviet intentions varied considerably within the US Government. To the Navy and to Henry Kissinger, the Russians were coming; hence, the United States should hurry to strengthen the military potential of the remote, British-owned Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia. By contrast, CIA's intelligence indicated that no sudden great Soviet buildup was likely in the Indian Ocean, given the absence of a prior US buildup there. According to the senior DI officer who accompanied him to the policy meetings, Colby stuck to his guns in the face of stiff high-level opposition from both Defense Department and White House: in this officer's opinion, this constituted "one of Colby's finest hours."⁴⁴

Covert US Support of Kurdish Rebels

CIA had earlier supported Kurdish rebels in Iraq, an effort championed by Henry Kissinger over the Agency's objections. The resulting covert program augmented the more substantial support the Shah of Iran had given these Kurds for some time. In early September 1975, however, a major public flap occurred when journalist Daniel Schorr revealed that President Nixon had arranged this CIA program and that the Shah had later changed his mind and abruptly suspended Iran's support of the Kurds, leaving them high and dry. Schorr's information had been leaked to him from the Pike committee, to which Colby had recently given closed testimony on this sensitive issue. The day following Schorr's broadcast, President Ford called Colby to the White House and informed him that he was going to be replaced as DCI.

Soviet Military Spending

This issue came to a head in October 1975, when sizable differences developed between the DCI's judgments and those of Defense Secretary Schlesinger (and other senior Pentagon figures). Colby's position, which he

⁴⁴For details see David Mark, "The Mayaguez Rescue Operation Revisited," *Studies in Intelligence* 23 (summer 1979): pp. 29-32 (~~Secret~~).

⁴⁵John Chomeau, interview by Harold P. Ford, summary notes, Washington, DC, 3 November 1986 (hereafter cited as Chomeau interview by Ford, 3 November 1986) (~~Secret~~). The US military, nonetheless, subsequently built up Diego Garcia.

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gave in testimony to Congress, was that Soviet military spending was not moving rapidly upward but was proceeding at the same steady 3-percent annual rise that it had maintained over previous decades. Colby also held that a substantial portion of Soviet defense expenditures was absorbed by missions for which there was no comparable US outlay, such as the costs of the military buildup along the Soviet Union's borders with China.⁴⁵

Still Other Issues

During the waning months of his DCI stewardship, Colby faced many such demands, over and above those already discussed. The most demanding of these additional issues were the fall of Cambodia and the evacuation of US [redacted] officials, suspension by Turkey of certain US [redacted] base rights, [redacted]

The End of the Road

On 30 January 1976, Colby departed CIA for the last time. Journalist Laurence Stern caught this poignant moment, writing that as Colby walked the last few steps to his car for his final drive home, "a rising gust of applause occurred as the crowd of colleagues, some of them wet-eyed," realized that Colby had been "a victim of changing public attitudes and the revelations that he himself had set in motion." Stern closed with this comparison:

The car, with Colby at the wheel, moved slowly away from the guards and the applause as President Ford and Bush shook hands. . . . It was an ending that would have done justice to George Smiley, the antihero of spy novelist John Le Carre: understated and not without its ironies.⁴⁶

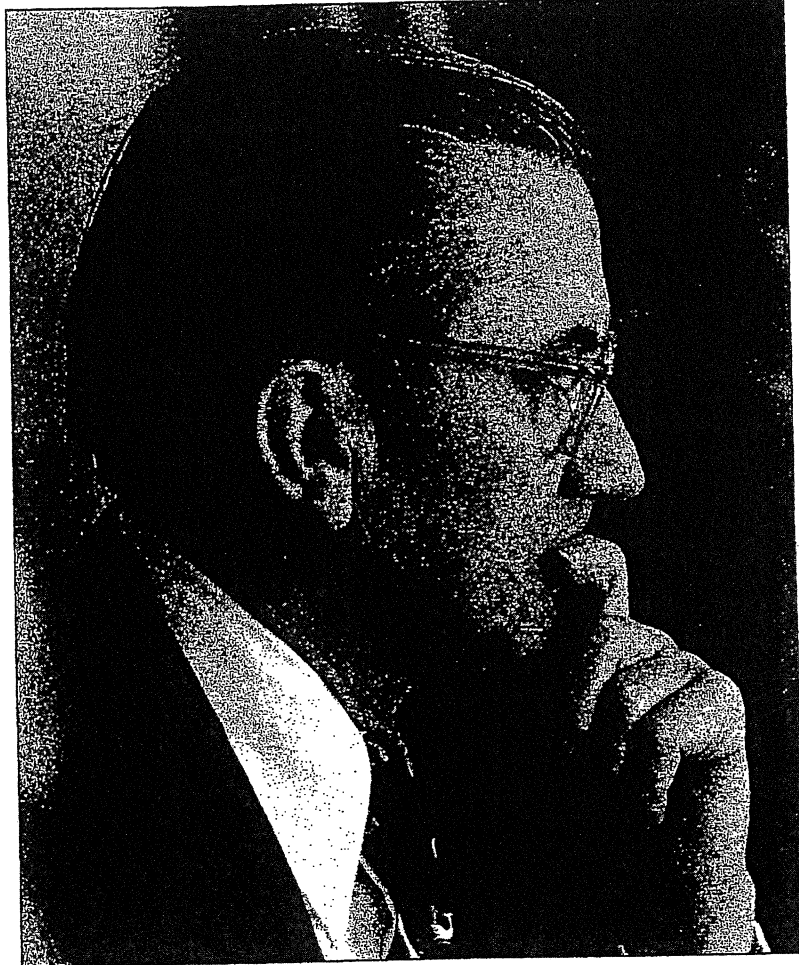
So ended Colby's 28-month reign as Director of Central Intelligence. His intentions had been admirable. He had initiated many reforms and handled many problems skillfully. But, in the end, changing circumstances and certain of his own missteps brought him down. He left office with the respect and good wishes of many—but not of those that counted most: Henry Kissinger and Gerald Ford.

⁴⁵In article by Laurence Stern, *The Washington Post*, 22 October 1975. Colby's testimony notwithstanding, the estimate that prevailed was that Soviet military spending was skyrocketing.

⁴⁶*The Washington Post*, 31 January 1976.

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Chapter 13

Retrospect

That we stand here now on restricted ground, that we interviewed Colby in his seventh-floor office are themselves signs that the cloak has started coming off. Colby saw that coming, and, professional to the end, tried to prepare the CIA for the inevitable. . . . To defend his agency, he adopted a policy of cautious candor with investigating committees that sometimes got him into trouble within his agency and in the Administration. He considers himself expendable, and he was expended.

Journalist Daniel Schorr, January 1976¹

During his first year as DCI, William Colby enjoyed some success in illustrating his managerial skills, his powers of initiative, and—most of all—his unique confidence that the times called for a new, more open CIA. His last year as DCI nonetheless abounded in trouble. Not only was he beset by a myriad of difficult problems, but also his position was progressively undermined by indications that the White House had decided to replace him. The public's first inkling of this came in May 1975, presumably the result of orchestrated leaks from the administration; such leaks continued up to the time President Ford announced in November that he was firing Colby.

It is ironic—and perhaps symbolic—that Colby, the Church committee, and the Pike committee all faltered at the very same time. It was on 28 January 1976 that the House of Representatives voted against publishing the Pike committee report. The next day, 29 January, the Church committee split on whether to publish its final report, with Senators Tower, Goldwater, and Baker all voting against making the report public. The very next day, 30 January, was Colby's last as DCI.

Looking back on these events, it is difficult to quarrel with Colby's assessment that in the end it was the excesses of the Church and Pike committees—coming on top of his other troubles with the White House—that made him expendable. Yet almost from the outset of his DCI tenure two years before, he had operated under fundamental constraints limiting his authority and the impact he could reasonably expect to make as Director of Central Intelligence.

¹Daniel Schorr, CBS television interview with William Colby, Washington, DC, 21 January 1976.

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William E. Colby

To many knowledgeable observers, Colby's fall was largely of his own making. Former DDI R. Jack Smith, for example, has stated that "the ethics of personal relationships do not apply to international affairs. And I don't think Bill recognizes that if you follow his argument to its conclusion, you cannot have an intelligence service." In Smith's opinion, a government has "to have some sort of sanctuary in a society's set of values in which secret things take place. America has never grown up in its thinking about it."² Similarly, former DCI Richard Helms—not surprisingly—has been very critical of Colby; in 1978 he told David Frost, "I don't believe that Colby was a KGB agent."³ Yet, many senior figures—in and out of the Agency—gave Colby very high marks, contending that he handled an extremely difficult job in an exemplary fashion. For example, Senator Charles Percy (R-IL) offered this encomium on the eve of Colby's retirement:

At a time when the CIA was under great attack from all fronts for misdeeds before your directorship, you have maintained a degree of candor and openness and a very welcomed and appropriate sense of humor . . . I think you've been a great American and I think you have performed as a great human being.⁴

Colby's tenure as Director of Central Intelligence was clearly one of mixed results. Although he was an often-effective manager, only some of his ambitious initiatives led to significant or lasting gain, while his abrupt style sometimes provoked resistance from both below and above. Within the Agency, his openness with investigating committees and his handling of the Angleton and Helms issues earned him the lasting enmity of many colleagues, especially in his own Directorate of Operations. More important, up the line, he never became a confidant of Henry Kissinger, President Nixon, or President Ford. With them, Colby remained a senior staff officer, speaking when he was spoken to and offering the views of US intelligence on the state of the world. His impact on policymaking was thus at best indirect; Henry Kissinger remained in effect the President's DCI, Secretary of State, and National Security Assistant. That Colby turned out to be more his own man and less a yes-man than the administration had initially expected, simply aggravated his relationships with Kissinger, Nixon, and Ford.

²R. Jack Smith, interview by John Ranelagh, as cited in Ranelagh, *The Agency*, p. 558. Smith had earlier served successively as a member of the Board in the Office of National Estimates, Director of the DI's Office of Current Intelligence, CIA's Deputy Director for Intelligence, and [redacted]

³Richard Helms, interview by David Frost, 22-23 May 1978, as reprinted in "An Interview with Richard Helms," *Studies in Intelligence* 25 (fall 1981): p. 17 (Unclassified).

⁴Senator Charles Percy, remarks made to William Colby during hearing of the Senate Government Operations Committee, 23 January 1976, as aired that evening on WETA TV.

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For that matter, it was perhaps a mistake for the Nixon administration to have chosen a professional intelligence officer as DCI, since by mid-1973 the Watergate-beset Presidency would have been better buttressed by a DCI from outside, some known public figure who could have lent the White House some political status of his own. Once in office, moreover, Colby's performance as DCI did not dispel much of the disdain with which the White House had long viewed CIA. Indeed, in spite of being an experienced, deft operator, Colby's failure to alert his superiors to the coming storms of the "family jewels," Seymour Hersh's charges, and past CIA dalliance with assassination planning fatally damaged his standing with the White House.

Nor did Colby succeed in gaining widespread support from the public at large. He assumed that his own good intentions would be recognized and welcomed. Many of the key actors in the country, however, did not consider it in their interest to respond positively to Colby's efforts toward greater openness. He never received general appreciation as the officer who had uncovered and outlawed certain questionable CIA practices. On the contrary, to a large degree the television cameras buttressed the public's impression that its concerns about CIA illegalities were legitimate.

Colby's own background also hurt him, especially his earlier involvement in the PHOENIX program in Vietnam. Correctly or not, that operation was widely viewed as having involved numerous excesses. Many would not take Colby's protestations of good intentions at face value, especially since he was now confirming to Congress and the American public the reality of such questionable earlier CIA conduct. Moreover, his own rather formal manner did not help him sell his reforms.

Other, broader factors also limited Colby's chances of success. He had been dealt a weak hand from the outset of his tenure. By that time, public attitudes with respect to US intelligence had begun to shift, and some past practices, especially those relating to covert operations, no longer enjoyed wide support. Rightly or wrongly, a certain euphoria about detente signified to many that there was now a less overriding need for continuing covert operations as a ready, effective weapon in our country's Cold War arsenal. Public support waned further when Colby himself confirmed existing suspicions about certain past CIA practices. Public dismay about Watergate had rubbed off on CIA as well, in light of the many allegations that the Agency had been involved in that scandal. At the same time, the days of coziness between a DCI and Capitol Hill mandarins were coming to an end, and new initiatives were afoot to create more thorough Congressional oversight of CIA. Throughout, Colby found he could not count on Messrs. Nixon, Ford, or Kissinger for much-needed support on Capitol Hill.

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In short, Colby's effort to strengthen US intelligence through candor was seriously constrained from many sides. His revelations fueled the excesses of the Church and Pike committees, fed the public's misconceptions about the purposes of US intelligence, and weakened the country's support of intelligence—at least for some time thereafter.

It is nonetheless this author's view that, while one may criticize certain aspects of William Colby's stewardship as Director of Central Intelligence, it is his positive accomplishments that deserve emphasis. Above all, Colby brought to the Directorship a sophisticated vision of what US intelligence should be all about, and he was creative in his efforts to so transform CIA. He was unique—especially as one who had come out of a wholly clandestine background in intelligence—in realizing that the DCI position he inherited in the mid-1970s involved responsibilities far beyond those traditionally championed by the DO. He also appreciated the changes in those Cold War attitudes that for more than two decades had so strongly fashioned CIA's character and conduct. As a former lawyer, Colby was determined that a DCI and CIA must respect the rule of law, must try to better fit the secret arms of government into the open patterns and values of American political life, and must respond to meaningful oversight by the Congress. Accordingly, he believed that he had to play it straight with Congress and the White House, reserving CIA's skills at conning adversaries for legitimate intelligence targets abroad. Even though his own earlier career had been almost wholly in covert action, Colby realized that such operations were limited in their applicability and should no longer be considered the central contribution of US intelligence to national life.

Colby felt strongly that the primary purpose of US intelligence must be to enrich the knowledge of policymakers, enabling them to better deal with the world threats and opportunities facing the United States. He realized that there was increasing need for wholly new types of collection systems, intelligence analysis, and intelligence interest. Finally, knowing that greater public support was necessary in order to finance the rising costs of tomorrow's Intelligence Community, he appreciated the importance of educating the American public about the central purposes of intelligence—another reason for greater openness on the part of the DCI and the CIA.

These insights and Colby's mixed record of achievements add up to more than just good intentions gone awry. His contribution reflected broad, statesmanlike appreciations and efforts. It is a pity that his overall tenure as DCI had overtones of a Greek tragedy, inasmuch as it was his fate to be buried beneath the cumulative effect of past CIA illegalities, a hostile White House, irresponsible Congressional committees, a sensationalist

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press, a suspicious public, and many CIA colleagues tied more to the past (and to personal friendship with Richard Helms) than to appreciation of what Colby was about.⁵

Shortly after he left office, Colby himself offered perhaps one of the most accurate assessments of his DCI tenure and its significance for America:

Did something new emerge? Yes, intelligence has traditionally existed in a shadowy field outside the law. This year's excitement has made clear that the rule of law applies to all parts of the American Government, including intelligence. . . . Its secrets will be understood to be necessary ones for the protection of our democracy in tomorrow's world, not covers for mistake or misdeed. . . . The costs of the past year were high, but they will be exceeded by the value of this strengthening of what was already the best intelligence service in the world.⁶

Postscript

If Colby has taken a lot of flak over the years about his DCI performance, he can find some consolation in a belated compliment from his principal boss, Henry Kissinger, a tough critic not known for compassion or confessions of error. As Colby recalls, one day late in 1975, Kissinger took him aside in the Oval Office and told him, "Bill, I feel required to say this to you. For the longest time I believed that what you were doing was wrong, that what you should have done was to cry havoc over the investigations in the name of national security. But I have come around to believe that your strategy was really correct."⁷ Whether or not Henry Kissinger was sincere on that occasion, Colby must be given credit for noble intentions and for having played well the poor hand he was dealt.

⁵Interviews and available documentary evidence indicate that, among intelligence officers, many of the severest critics of Colby tend to be DO and former DO officers; whereas other intelligence officers—from such worlds as Congressional liaison, analysis, science and technology, General Counsel, Inspector General, and non-CIA intelligence officers—tend to give Colby higher marks.

⁶William Colby, article in *The New York Times*, 26 February 1976.

⁷Colby, *Honorable Men*, p. 450.

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~~Secret~~*Appendix A***William E. Colby's CIA Career**

November 1950	Joins CIA. First assignment: Western European Division, Office of Policy Coordination (OPC)
1951	OPC's representative in <input type="text"/>
1953	Deputy Directorate for Plans (DDP) political action officer, <input type="text"/>
1959	Deputy Chief of Station, Saigon
1960	Chief of Station, Saigon
1962	Deputy Chief, Far East Division, DDP
1962	Chief, Far East Division, DDP
1968	Assigned to Agency for International Development (AID) as Deputy Director of Civil Operations and Rural Development (CORDS), Saigon
1968	Director, CORDS (with the rank of Ambassador)
1972	CIA's Executive Director-Comptroller
1973	Deputy Director for Operations (DDO)
10 May 1973	Nominated as DCI by President Nixon
4 September 1973- 30 January 1976	Director of Central Intelligence

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~~Secret~~*Appendix B***Observations on William Colby's Makeup****Oriana Fallaci (in an interview of Colby)**

A priest like you. Oh, Mr. Colby, you'll never know how much you two [referring to Portugese Communist Party chief Alvaro Cunhal] resemble each other. Had you been born on the other side of the barricade, you would have been a perfect Stalinist.

Colby (responding to Fallaci)

I reject such a statement. . . . But . . . well . . . it might be. No, no. It might not. And I am not a priest. At the most I'm a puritan.¹

Representative Otis Pike, December 1975

It has been my experience and judgment that if you [Mr. Colby] are asked precisely the right question, you will give an honest answer. You do not lead us into those areas which would help us know what the right question was to ask. You do not make it easy for us to ask the right question. Anyone who thinks you have been running back and forth to Capitol Hill with briefcases bulging with secrets which you are eager to bestow upon us hasn't sat on my side of the desk.²

Representative Otis Pike, April 1976

Mr. Colby is a very bright man and he knows how to play with words. But he isn't dishonest.³

Nguyen Cao Ky (onetime South Vietnamese strongman)

I returned to the hangar after one night flight to find a stranger waiting to meet me. He wore glasses, was rather slight and pale, with nondescript hair. He spoke very softly and seemed a quiet man. I remember thinking he looked like a student of philosophy, until I saw the eyes behind the glasses: never still, watching every movement, watching everybody in the room.⁴

¹Colby interview by Fallaci, 7 March 1976.

²Pike statement to DCI Colby, as cited in Donald Gregg, "Congress and the Directorate of Operations—An Odd Couple?" *Studies in Intelligence* 23 (spring 1979): p. 34.

³Fallaci interview with Congressman Otis Pike, as cited in *The New Republic*, 3 April 1976, p. 10.

⁴Nguyen Cao Ky, *Twenty Years and Twenty Days* (New York: Stein & Day, 1976), p. 24.

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~~Secret~~*William E. Colby***David Martin**

An intense, unflappable . . . Catholic. . . . A colorless but decent man, Colby seemed the model of the faceless but faithful government servant. . . . Colby seemed the clandestine replica of Harry Truman, even down to the clear-rimmed spectacles.⁵

Colby

Clemenceau said that he who is not a radical when he is young has no heart; he who is not conservative when he's old has no brain. . . . If you support some authoritarian leader against a Communist threat, you leave the option that the authoritarian state could become democratic in the future. With the Communists, the future offers no hope. . . . Pinochet is not going to conquer the world. Nobody is worried about Pinochet.⁶

An anonymous CIA officer critical of Colby

I just have a feeling about Bill Colby that he is quite lacking in the qualities that enable most of us to be introspective about our behavior. As far as I can judge his mind, I have a feeling it's a pretty blunt mind that has certain fixed points in it. I have this feeling that he has the ability to reduce quite complicated questions to points that just won't do with the real world. One of his friends and admirers said to me, "The thing you have to understand about Bill Colby is that he's intransigent." Everybody I've ever talked to who worked with Bill said that they would go in and talk to him, and he would smile and listen to them, and nine times out of ten they would come out persuaded that he would think about it, but he never swerved. He had a total incapacity to compromise. That's the judgment I've come to.⁷

David Phillips (former senior DO officer)

Slight of build, with pale, dull eyes, Colby appeared to be almost anything rather than soldier or intelligence chief. . . . Colby the priest was concerned about people. He always found time, despite a hectic daily agenda, to listen to any CIA employee who had a grievance to discuss with the boss. "Bill," a senior colleague told me, "would stop his business to stroke any stray cat which wandered into his office." Colby lunched regularly with junior officers in the cafeteria, seeking their opinions and probing for early warning of morale problems. Colby the soldier could be tough, even stubborn. In 1973 he conducted an informal poll among senior officers asking what they thought of his idea of publishing a daily

⁵David C. Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), p. 145, p. 211.

⁶Colby interview by Fallaci, 7 March 1976.

⁷Quoted in Ranelagh, *The Agency*, p. 558.

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Observations

newspaper at CIA. They unanimously considered it a poor idea and told Colby so. The DCI mulled their recommendations then proceeded with his project.⁸

David Phillips (in selecting which of five former DCIs one would choose as a sole companion if shipwrecked on a desert island when a book titled *How To Build a Boat for One Passenger* happened to float ashore)

I selected Colby. He would get us both off that island. Certainly he would never entertain the notion of building a boat for one or, if he did reach that point, he would later stand in the surf and wave goodbye—a faint smile on his thin lips—after pushing me out to sea.⁹

John Ranelagh

[Colby's] instinct was to reach for the law and be guided by the letter of the law when in crisis, rather than to reach for friends and private arrangements. It was the contrast between the journalist, Helms, with a concept of "off-the-record" and "deep background briefing" and the lawyer, Colby, who knew that ultimately everything was on the record under law.¹⁰

Thomas Powers

Colby was Helms's opposite in his approach to intelligence, by temperament and choice a covert political operator, impatient with the caution and painstaking procedure of traditional intelligence collection. . . . [He was] fundamentally out of sympathy with the sort of intelligence service Helms believed in.¹¹

Aaron Latham (in his novel, *Orchids for Mother*)

Even at his best, O'Hara [Colby] resembled a Xerox copy of a man. Mad, he looked like a Xerox of a Xerox.¹²

Bob Woodward

To a question about CIA secrets from someone without the proper security clearance or need to know, Colby's face would grow small and seem to disappear, running for cover behind his glasses and into his eye sockets. His palms would turn out and his shoulders fly toward his ears. He didn't remember.¹³

⁸Phillips, *The Night Watch*, pp. 244-245. Among those officers who responded to Colby in the negative about his idea for a current intelligence newspaper was the author of this study, Harold P. Ford. What these critics did not perhaps know was that Colby had had a yen for such a classified newspaper for 20 years, ever since 1953 when in [] he had talked up his idea—unsuccessfully—to the visiting DCI Allen Dulles.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 280.

¹⁰Ranelagh, *The Agency*, p. 615.

¹¹Powers, *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, p. 360.

¹²Latham, *Orchids for Mother*, p. 17.

¹³Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 61-62.

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~~Secret~~*William E. Colby***Patrick McGarvey (former CIA officer stationed in Saigon)**

This guy walks in. An innocent looking little man with glasses. Mr. Peepers. He asked us what we do. "Christ," I said, "We spend eight hours a day trying to figure that out." . . . Then he says, "By the way, my name's Bill Colby."¹⁴

William Bader (former CIA officer, and a senior staffer Church committee)

Of all the personalities who came before the Committee, Colby's was the most difficult for us to fathom. I saw quite a bit of him, but I was never sure just who the real Bill Colby was.¹⁵

Ray S. Cline

Bill is a courageous, broadminded intelligence officer, a man of total integrity and dedication to the public service.¹⁶

Bill was moral, upright, almost a Boy Scout. He was righteous, at least as he defined the particular righteousness in question. Colby, like Bill Casey later, had a great certainty that by talking to the press he could bring newsmen around to the point of view he wanted them to carry away. But, in the case of both Bills, such certainty was misplaced, and the results were the other way around: Sy Hersh did in Colby, Bob Woodward did in Casey.¹⁷

¹⁴Patrick McGarvey, as quoted in David Wise, "Dark Side Up: Colby of C.I.A.—C.I.A. of Colby," *The New York Times Magazine*, 1 July 1973.

¹⁵William Bader, interview by Harold P. Ford, summary notes, Washington, DC, 12 July 1988.

¹⁶Ray S. Cline, *Secrets, Spies and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA* (Washington, DC: Acropolis Books, 1976), p. 219.

¹⁷Cline interview by Ford, 31 March 1988.

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Appendix C

**Excerpts From Seymour Hersh's Charges
Against the CIA
(*The New York Times*, 22 December, 1974)**

HUGE C.I.A. OPERATION REPORTED IN
U.S. AGAINST ANTIWAR FORCES,
OTHER DISSIDENTS, IN NIXON YEARS

FILES ON CITIZENS

HELMS REPORTEDLY GOT
SURVEILLANCE DATA IN
CHARTER VIOLATION

The Central Intelligence Agency, directly violating its charter, conducted a massive, illegal domestic operation during the Nixon administration against the antiwar movement and other dissident groups in the United States, according to well-placed Government sources.

An extensive investigation by *The New York Times* has established that intelligence files on at least 10,000 American citizens were maintained by a special unit of the C.I.A. that was reporting directly to Richard Helms, then the Director of Central Intelligence and now Ambassador to Iran.

Mr. Helms, who became head of the C.I.A. in 1966 and left the agency in February 1973, for his new post in Teheran, could not be reached despite telephone calls there yesterday and today.

At least one avowedly antiwar member of Congress was among those placed under surveillance by the C.I.A., the sources said. Other members of Congress were said to be included in the C.I.A.'s dossier on dissident Americans.

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William E. Colby

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It also could not be determined whether Mr. Helms had had specific authority from the President or any of his top officials to initiate the alleged domestic surveillance, or whether Mr. Helms had informed the President of the fruits, if any, of the alleged operations.

These alleged activities are known to have distressed both Mr. Schlesinger, now the Secretary of Defense, and Mr. Colby. Mr. Colby has reportedly told associates that he is considering the possibility of asking the Attorney General to institute legal action against some of those who had been involved in the alleged domestic activities.

But he [Schlesinger] was described by an associate as extremely concerned and disturbed by what he discovered at the C.I.A. upon replacing Mr. Helms.

"He found himself in a cesspool," the associate said. "He was having a grenade blowing up in his face every time he turned around."

"Counterintelligence!" one high-level Justice Department official exclaimed upon being given some details of the C.I.A.'s alleged domestic operations. "They're not supposed to have any counter-intelligence operations in this country."

"Oh my God," he said, "oh my God."

A former high-level F.B.I. official who operated in domestic counterintelligence areas since World War I, expressed astonishment and then anger upon being told of the C.I.A.'s alleged domestic activities.

"We had an agreement with them that they weren't to do anything unless they checked with us," he said. "They double-crossed me all along."

The C.I.A. domestic activities during the Nixon Administration were directed, the source said, by James Angleton, who is still in charge of the Counterintelligence Department, the agency's most powerful and mysterious unit.

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~~Secret~~*Excerpts*

The *Times*' sources, who included men with access to first-hand knowledge of the C.I.A.'s alleged domestic activities, took sharp exception to the official suggestion that such activities were the result of legitimate counterintelligence needs.

"Look, that's how it started," one man said. "They were looking for evidence of foreign involvement in the antiwar movement. But that's not how it ended up. This just grew and mushroomed internally."

This source and others knowledgeable about the C.I.A. believe that Mr. Angleton was permitted to continue his alleged domestic operations because of the great power he wields inside the agency as director of counterintelligence.

Dozens of other former C.I.A. men talked in recent interviews with similar expressions of fear and awe about Mr. Angleton, an accomplished botanist and Yale graduate who once edited a poetry magazine there.

Most of the domestic surveillance and the collection of domestic intelligence was conducted, the sources said, by one of the most clandestine units in the United States intelligence community, the special operations branch of counterintelligence.

"That's really the deep snow section," one high-level intelligence expert said of the unit, whose liaison with Mr. Helms was conducted by Richard Ober, a longtime counterintelligence official who has served in New Delhi for the C.I.A.

"Ober had unique and very confidential access to Helms," the former C.I.A. man said. "I always assumed he was mucking about with Americans who were abroad and then would come back, people like the Black Panthers."

The official also raised a question about the bureaucratic procedures of the C. I.A. under Mr. Helms and suggested that his penchant for secrecy apparently kept the most complete intelligence information from being forwarded to the White House.

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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

2 September 2011

Mr. James L. Srodes
1754 Park Road, NW
Washington, DC 20010-2105

Reference: F-2007-00091

Dear Mr. Srodes:

This is a final response to your 4 August 2006 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for **The CIA in-house biography of William Colby prepared by Harold P. Ford**. As you will recall, in our 18 October 2006 letter, we informed you that we had already initiated searches for information for an earlier request received prior to yours. We cross-referenced your request to the earlier one in order to send you any records that were found to be releasable.

The earlier case has recently concluded. We have enclosed the document, totaling 236 pages, which we can release in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of FOIA exemptions (b)(1) and (b)(3). An explanation of exemptions is enclosed. Exemption (b)(3) pertains to information exempt from disclosure by statute. The relevant statute is the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 U.S.C. § 403, as amended, e.g., Section 6, which exempts from the disclosure requirement information pertaining to the organization, functions, including those related to the protection of intelligence sources and methods, names, official titles, salaries, and numbers of personnel employed by the Agency. Since you are entitled to the first 100 pages free of charge the total cost to you is \$13.60. Please remit a check or money order made payable to the Treasurer of the United States citing reference number F-2007-00091 to ensure proper credit to your account.

As the CIA Information and Privacy Coordinator, I am the CIA official responsible for this determination. You have the right to appeal this response to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 45 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Viscuso", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Susan Viscuso
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

Explanation of Exemptions

Freedom of Information Act:

- (b)(1) applies to material which is properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy;
- (b)(2) applies to information which pertains solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of the Agency;
- (b)(3) applies to information pertaining to the CIA Director's statutory obligations to protect from disclosure intelligence sources and methods, as well as the organization, functions, names, official titles, salaries or numbers of personnel employed by the Agency, in accordance with the National Security Act of 1947 and/or the CIA Act of 1949;
- (b)(4) applies to information such as trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person on a privileged or confidential basis;
- (b)(5) applies to inter- and intra-agency memoranda or letters which are predecisional and deliberative in nature, or consist of attorney work-product or attorney-client information;
- (b)(6) applies to information, the release of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of other individuals; and
- (b)(7) applies to investigatory records, the release of which could: (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings, (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of others, (D) disclose the identity of a confidential source, (E) disclose investigative techniques and procedures, or (F) endanger the life or physical safety of an individual.

Privacy Act:

- (d)(5) applies to information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action or proceeding;
- (j)(1) applies to polygraph records; documents or segregable portions of documents, the release of which would disclose intelligence sources and methods, including names of certain Agency employees and organizational components; and documents or information provided by foreign governments;
- (k)(1) applies to material properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy;
- (k)(2) applies to investigatory material compiled for law enforcement purposes;
- (k)(5) applies to investigatory material compiled solely for the purpose of determining suitability, eligibility, or qualifications for Federal civilian employment, or access to classified information, the release of which would disclose a confidential source; and
- (k)(6) applies to testing or examination material used to determine individual qualifications for appointment or promotion in Federal Government service, the release of which would compromise the testing or examination process.