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Too Many Lawmakers Leaking Secrets, Colby Testifies

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Complaining bitterly about secrets that were exposed as a result of congressional briefings, CIA Director William E. Colby today urged Congress to sharply reduce the number of lawmakers entitled to know what intelligence agencies are doing.

In testimony prepared for the Senate Government Operations committee, Colby suggested a single House-Senate intelligence committee which should be kept informed of CIA activities but could not be permitted to make public the agency's secrets.

In addition, Colby said, the proposed committee should establish "reasonable limits . . . as to the matters made available even to it."

AS AN EXAMPLE of topics which should be ruled out of bounds for the new committee, Colby cited the names of undercover agents operating abroad.

Colby said the present situation in which the CIA must inform eight congressional committees of its secret activities is unworkable.

"Every one of the new projects that were submitted to this process has leaked into the public domain," Colby said.

However, Colby implied that the earlier system under which a few friendly congressmen — noted for their ability to keep secrets — were informed of CIA activities was not satisfactory either.

"Too great a stress on secrecy has STAT situations in which members of Congress who were fully briefed on intelligence activities pleaded later that they had never heard of them

when they came to public attention," Colby said.

"One of the chairmen of our committees once indicated on the floor of the Senate that he had no inkling of one of our operations, although he had approved the specific appropriations necessary to continue it," Colby said.

"His statement certainly kept the secrecy of his participation in our

operation, but at the sacrifice of implying that our intelligence activities were operating without oversight and control."

BUT COLBY reserved most of his criticism for the House Intelligence Committee and for Rep. Leo Ryan, D-Calif., a member of the CIA subcommittee of the House International Relations Committee.

Without mentioning it by name, Colby accused the House Intelligence panel, headed by Rep. Otis Pike, D-N.Y., of going back on a promise not to release classified information.

Colby said any future committee must have rules against publication of classified matter "and this must apply to any release of the information, so as not to lead to an absurd situation in which a committee agrees not to release individual reports of secret reports but then proposes to publish them in its final report."

The Pike Committee voted this week to include in its final report, to be issued next month, sections on CIA activities in Angola and Italy which President Ford earlier blocked from release as separate reports.

COLBY DID NOT name Ryan either but his implication was clear.

"We cannot run secret operations, if congressmen confirm to inquiring newsmen operating on a lead that indeed they were given a secret briefing on a covert operation in a certain country, instead of refusing to comment," Colby said.

"Neither can we run secret operations if individual congressmen announce that there are three other operations which have not yet been disclosed, thereby stimulating every investigative reporter in Washington to determine the specifics thereof by some hypothetical questions," Colby said.

Colby also used the indirect approach to criticize the Senate Intelligence committee for failing to cover the identity of Dr. Sidney Gottlieb in its report on assassination plots.

"WE CANNOT conduct covert operations if a committee puts out a report which refers to an activity which leaves out the name of the country or individual

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