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THE WHITE HOUSE


WASHINGTON

SECRET

ACTION

January 19, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT 

SUBJECT: Award of the National Security Medal
to William E. Colby

Lt. General Vernon A. Walters, Deputy Director of CIA, has forwarded a recommendation (Tab A) that you award the National Security Medal to DCI William E. Colby for his vital contributions during the last 26 years to the foreign intelligence interests of the United States. These contributions include:

- o his extremely capable performances at several foreign posts in the 1950s,
- o his heroic efforts as Chief of Station in Saigon from 1960-1962,
- o his outstanding performance as head of the pacification program in Vietnam after the 1968 Tet Offensive, and
- o his remarkable leadership of the Intelligence Community since September 1973.

I recommend that you award the National Security Medal to DCI Colby. A proposed citation for the award is at Tab B and a short description of the award and a list of former recipients is at Tab D.

General Walters' cover letter to me forwarding and endorsing the recommendation is at Tab C.

SECRET/XGDS-2
(Unclassified when
separated from Tab D)

Classified by Brent Scowcroft XGDS
of E. O. 11652 by authority of
Brent Scowcroft; Exemption Category
(Section 5(B)(2)).

Determined to be Administrative Marking

Date 4-25-89 By KR

RECOMMENDATION

That you award the National Security Medal to William E. Colby for his many contributions to the intelligence field.

APPROVE _____ DISAPPROVE _____

OTHER _____

If you approve, please sign the certificate at Tab E. We will then make arrangements for an appropriate ceremony of presentation.

*approved and original
package returned to NSC.
HBF*

Proposed Award of the National Security Medal
to Mr. William E. Colby, Director
of Central Intelligence

1. The National Security Medal was established by President Truman via Executive Order 10431 on 19 January 1953. Under that Executive Order's provisions, the National Security Medal may be awarded by the President (or by such persons as he may designate) for "distinguished achievement or outstanding contribution" in the field of "intelligence relating to the national security." The implementing regulations for the National Security Medal, also approved by President Truman on 19 January 1953, provide that the contribution of recipients of the award should consist of "exceptionally meritorious service performed in a position of high responsibility." It is our desire to nominate Mr. William E. Colby for this award. At this writing, he is Director of Central Intelligence, though he will relinquish that post as soon as his successor, Mr. George Bush, is confirmed by the Senate and sworn in. It is our opinion that Mr. Colby's service to his country in the field of intelligence more than meets the criteria established for the National Security Medal. For almost three decades, Mr. Colby has served his country in both military and civil capacities, in the process writing a record of dedication, performance and achievement that is truly unique.

2. Mr. Colby was born on 4 January 1920. His father was a regular Army officer and his childhood was spent at a variety of military posts, both in the United States and abroad (in Tientsin, China). He attended Princeton University from which he took his BA with honors in 1940, majoring in Political Science. His future achievements were foreshadowed by his undergraduate attainments, both in his studies (he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa) and in extra-curricular activities. After graduation, he entered Columbia Law School with the intent of becoming a lawyer.

3. Mr. Colby's legal studies were interrupted by World War II. At Princeton he had been in the ROTC. He went on active duty as a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery

in 1941 and was discharged a major in 1945. Shortly after entering the Army, he volunteered for OSS and after training in the United States was assigned to a joint allied team known as the Jedburghs. (This group--composed of American, British, Dutch and other personnel--performed some of the most spectacular feats of unconventional warfare achieved by allied forces during the whole struggle.) In 1944, then Captain Colby jumped behind German lines into occupied France to lead a team harassing German forces in support of the Normandy invasion. For his courage and exploits on this mission he was awarded the U. S. Bronze Star, the French Croix de Guerre and several times mentioned in allied dispatches. In 1945 he parachuted into then German-occupied Norway to organize resistance groups harassing the movement of German forces from that country to reinforce the German divisions opposing the allied advance through Europe. His exploits in Norway were even more spectacular than those in France. For them, he was awarded the U. S. Silver Star, with the recommendation being personally signed by General Bedel Smith (General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff). He was also awarded the Cross of St. Olaf, which was personally given to him after the war by the King of Norway in recognition of Captain Colby's contributions to the attainment of Norwegian independence from German occupation.

4. When the war ended, Mr. Colby returned to Columbia Law School, from which he graduated in 1949. He practiced in New York for two years with the firm headed by Mr. William Donovan, the wartime chief of OSS. He then spent a year as an attorney with the National Labor Relations Board in Washington.

5. Mr. Colby went back into the intelligence profession in 1950, joining the CIA as an operations officer. After a year in the United States he was posted to Stockholm, where he handled a variety of sensitive projects with commendable success. From 1953 through 1958 he served in Rome, where he made a major contribution to the frustration of Communist efforts to take over the Italian government and played a significant personal role in preserving Italian democracy. His performance in that delicate assignment won the high regard not only of the Italians with whom he worked so successfully, but also of our Ambassador, Clare Booth Luce, who would be perhaps the best person to consult for an evaluation of Mr. Colby's contributions during that period.

6. In February 1959, he was posted to Saigon, initially as the Deputy Chief of the CIA Station there. He took over the Station in June 1960 and served as its chief until July 1962. In Saigon his performance was typical of his whole career: low key, efficient and enormously effective. He rendered great contributions to his own government and to that of our Vietnamese allies during the period when the Communists resumed their armed struggle and President Kennedy made a quantum increase in the American effort in response to this new Vietnamese Communist policy. Mr. Colby also played a significant personal role during the troubled period in 1961 when the Diem government was almost overthrown by non-Communist elements of the South Vietnamese army. Mr. Colby's house happened to be almost immediately adjacent to the Presidential Palace in which Diem was residing and which was the initial object of the rebel assault. Despite the fact that his home was in the midst of a withering crossfire, Mr. Colby coolly took charge of the situation, got himself to the Embassy and played a key role in settling those troubled events. For his heroism and his effectiveness in that crisis he was subsequently awarded the Intelligence Medal of Merit.

7. On returning to the United States in July 1962, Mr. Colby became the Deputy Chief of the Far East Division of CIA's Directorate of Operations. In January 1963 he became the Chief of the Division and, as such, had charge of all CIA activities throughout the Far East. His personal leadership and effective management enhanced the Agency's contributions to the U. S. Government's activities throughout the Far East, particularly in Vietnam as the war there steadily grew and expanded.

8. In the aftermath of the 1968 Tet Offensive, President Johnson asked the then DCI (Mr. Helms) to send Mr. Colby to the White House to take over the pacification program in Vietnam. Mr. Colby resigned from the CIA to become the Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development (CORDS) to the U. S. Commander in Vietnam. In this position he held the personal rank of Ambassador, given him by President Johnson. His performance in this complex, delicate assignment was truly outstanding. Thanks in no small measure to his guidance and the force of personal example, programs were instituted by both the United States and the South Vietnamese government which had the net effect of virtually winning the guerrilla war.

When South Vietnam eventually fell, it was conquered by 18 line divisions of the North Vietnamese army, not by the insurgent guerrillas who had threatened its survival in 1968.

9. In October 1971 Mr. Colby returned to Washington and resumed his career with the CIA. Soon thereafter (in January 1972) the then DCI named him the Agency's Executive Director-Comptroller. Mr. Colby discharged the responsibilities of that position with great distinction, but when Mr. Schlesinger became DCI in February 1973, Mr. Colby made bureaucratic history by recommending organizational changes in which his post was abolished. During this period of transition, Mr. Schlesinger--the new DCI--asked Mr. Colby to take over the Directorate of Operations and the secretaryship of the Agency's Management Committee. For his contributions to CIA throughout his career, Mr. Colby was awarded the CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal in 1973.

10. When Mr. Schlesinger became Secretary of Defense, the President appointed Mr. Colby his successor as DCI. He took the oath of office and assumed that position on 4 September 1973. As DCI, Mr. Colby has led the CIA and the whole American Intelligence Community through one of the most troubled periods in its entire history. Amid a welter of charges levied in the public press and a succession of investigations by Executive Branch commissions and two committees of Congress, Mr. Colby has had to explain and account for the past, for actions or alleged actions in which he was in no way involved and for which he was not responsible; to look to the future; and at the same time keep the Intelligence Community functioning and steadily improving in its service to those who make our government's decisions on foreign and national security policy. His performance under these impossible conditions has been nothing short of remarkable. Not only has the Intelligence Community continued to function, but he has made innovations and improvements in its procedures which have greatly increased its effectiveness and made American intelligence truly the best in the world. If ever there was "especially meritorious service performed in a position of high responsibility" or "distinguished achievement [and] outstanding contribution in the field of intelligence relating to the national security," it is reflected in the career and contributions of William Egan Colby. It is for these reasons we recommend that he be awarded the National Security Medal.

CITATION

Mr. Colby's outstanding career in intelligence began during World War II when he served with distinction in the Office of Strategic Services. After discharge from the United States Army, he obtained his LL.B. in 1947 from Columbia University and practiced law until he joined the Central Intelligence Agency in 1950. This began the civilian phase of service to his country in the intelligence field and few, if any, have served it with more devotion.

His ability, initiative and insatiable drive led ineluctably to a series of senior intelligence positions, each with added responsibility and broader scope, and culminated with his appointment in 1973 as Director of Central Intelligence. His prodigious contributions to the Agency and the Intelligence Community throughout his career reflect the highest credit on him and will endure as testimony of his unique capacity to cope with complex global challenges to our national security.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

19 DEC 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret)
Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Nomination of William E. Colby,
Director of Central Intelligence,
for the National Security Medal

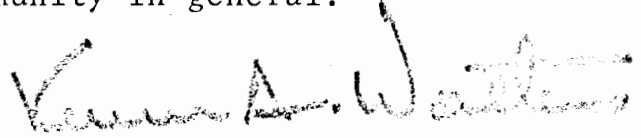
1. Attached is a recommendation (Tab A) that the National Security Medal be awarded to William E. Colby. This recommendation has been prepared in accordance with Executive Order 10431 which establishes the National Security Medal and the Regulations promulgated by President Truman concerning its award. (Copy attached as Tab B.)

2. Mr. Colby's outstanding career in intelligence began during World War II when he served with distinction in the Office of Strategic Services. He joined the Agency in 1950 and since that time has held a series of increasingly responsible senior positions culminating with his appointment by President Nixon as Director of Central Intelligence in September 1973. Service to country has been his hallmark, and his contribution when measured by any standard is above challenge. He is devoted to the welfare of our nation, and his impeccable integrity in the performance of his duties has set an exemplary standard for the Intelligence Community at large.

3. If the President approves the award, it will be necessary for him to sign the enclosed certificate, which accompanies the medal. It would also be appropriate for the President to present the award if his schedule would permit.



4. I strongly support this recommendation. The award is justly deserved and will appropriately recognize the outstanding contributions that Mr. Colby has made to the Agency and the Intelligence Community in general.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Vernon A. Walters". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized manner with a large initial 'V'.

Vernon A. Walters
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy Director

Attachments a/s

ITEM WITHDRAWAL SHEET
WITHDRAWAL ID 00586

Collection/Series/Folder ID No. : 004700160
Reason for Withdrawal : NS,National security restriction
Type of Material : LIS,List(s)
Description : re National Security Medal recipi
ents
Creation Date : 01/1976?
Volume (pages) : 1
Date Withdrawn : 05/03/1988

EXECUTIVE ORDER 10431

NATIONAL SECURITY MEDAL

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the armed forces of the United States, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. There is hereby established a medal to be known as the National Security Medal with accompanying ribbons and appurtenances. The medal and its appurtenances shall be of appropriate design, approved by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.
2. The National Security Medal may be awarded to any person, without regard to nationality, including members of the armed forces of the United States, for distinguished achievement or outstanding contribution on or after July 26, 1947, in the field of intelligence relating to the national security.
3. The decoration established by this order shall be awarded by the President of the United States or, under regulations approved by him, by such person or persons as he may designate.
4. No more than one National Security Medal shall be awarded to any one person, but for subsequent services justifying an award, a suitable device may be awarded to be worn with the Medal.
5. Members of the armed forces of the United States who are awarded the decoration established by this order are authorized to wear the medal and the ribbon symbolic of the award, as may be authorized by uniform regulations approved by the Secretary of Defense.
6. The decoration established by this order may be awarded posthumously.

HARRY S. TRUMAN

THE WHITE HOUSE,
January 19, 1953.

REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE AWARD OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY MEDAL

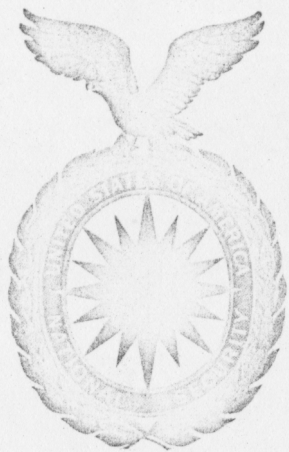
Pursuant to Paragraph 2 of Executive Order 10431, the following regulations are hereby issued to govern the award of the National Security Medal:

1. The National Security Medal may be awarded to any person without regard to nationality, including a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, who, on or after 26 July 1947, has made an outstanding contribution to the National Intelligence effort. This contribution may consist of either exceptionally meritorious service performed in a position of high responsibility or of an act of valor requiring personal courage of a high degree and complete disregard of personal safety.
2. The National Security Medal with accompanying ribbon and appurtenances, shall be of appropriate design to be approved by the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.
3. The National Security Medal shall be awarded only by the President or his designee for that purpose.
4. Recommendations may be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council by any individual having personal knowledge of the facts of the exceptionally meritorious conduct or act of valor of the candidate in the performance of outstanding services, either as an eyewitness or from the testimony of others who have personal knowledge or were eyewitnesses. Any recommendations shall be accompanied by complete documentation, including where necessary, certificates, affidavits or sworn transcripts of testimony. Each recommendation for an award shall show the exact status, at the time of the rendition of the service on which the recommendation is based, with respect to citizenship, employment, and all other material factors, of the person who is being recommended for the National Security Medal.
5. Each recommendation shall contain a draft of an appropriate citation to accompany the award of the National Security Medal.

Approved:

HARRY S. TRUMAN
January 19, 1953.

TAGO 2796B



The United States of America

To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

*This is to certify that the President
of the United States of America has awarded*

THE NATIONAL SECURITY MEDAL
TO

William E. Colby

for outstanding contribution to the National Intelligence Effort.

Given under my hand in the City of Washington this day of 19 .



STAFFING

EYES ONLY

THE WHITE HOUSE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

WASHINGTON

LOG NO.:

Date: January 20, 1976

Time:

FOR ACTION:

cc (for information):

Phil Buchen ✓

Jack Marsh ✓

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date:

Wednesday, January 21

Time:

10 A.M.

SUBJECT:

Brent Scowcroft's memo of 1/19/76
regarding the National Security Medal

ACTION REQUESTED:

___ For Necessary Action

X ___ For Your Recommendations

___ Prepare Agenda and Brief

___ Draft Reply

X ___ For Your Comments

___ Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

EYES ONLY

Marsh - Concur
Buchen - concur

Signed & to NSB
1/22/76

up 1/21/76

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

Jim Connor
For the President

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1.20.76

TO: Brent Scowcroft

Tab A states Colby
graduated from law
school in 1949. The
Citation, Tab B, says he
rec'd his LLB in 1947.
Should one of these be changed.

Robert D. Blinder.

1947 - Tab A changed

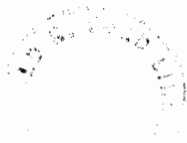
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Bob Linder -

For your review --- we are
presently staffing this on a
very close hold basis.

Trudy Fry

1/20/76



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

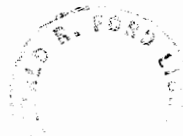
Jim

Since this is to Mr. Colby
do you think we should staff?

I thinking of:

Jack Marsh
Phil Buchen

Trudy



EYES ONLY

THE WHITE HOUSE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

WASHINGTON

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ACTION REQUESTED:

_____ For Necessary Action

X _____ For Your Recommendations

_____ Prepare Agenda and Brief

_____ Draft Reply

X _____ For Your Comments

_____ Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

EYES ONLY

January 20, 1976

I support this proposal.

P.W.B.

Philip Buchen

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

Jim Connor
For the President