

THE FED PAGE



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CIA Director William Colby, right, does a credible impression of not being a psychopath as he and deputy Sayre Stevens are sworn in for a 1975 Senate intelligence committee hearing on CIA activities.



In the Loop

AL KAMEN AND
COLBY ITKOWITZ

Candid Kissinger

CIA Director William Colby's openness four decades ago about some of the more odious U.S. intelligence practices did not go over well with Henry Kissinger.

Speaking on the phone with McGeorge Bundy, who was national security adviser to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, Kissinger referred to Colby as a "psychopath."

The two men were chatting about post-Watergate congressional investigations into CIA activities and were worried about leaks and misinformation.

In the June 1975 telephone conversation, Kissinger referred to Colby as "the psychopath running the CIA. You accuse him of a traffic violation and he confesses murder." Colby, Loop fans will recall, was replaced soon after as director of the CIA by George H.W. Bush.

That conversation is part of 900 final Kissinger phone transcripts from the Gerald Ford administration released Wednesday by the National Security Archive, which sued the State Department in March to have them released.

For history buffs, the tapes are precious gold, providing a window into Kissinger's candor when he was chatting privately on a host of major issues, including the end of the Vietnam War.

One series of chats about U.S.-Israeli relations exposed how little the Ford administration thought of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. (Hmm, a U.S. president who doesn't get along with an Israeli prime minister. Where have we heard that before?) Ford told Kissinger that he had

been "offended by [Rabin's] attitude" and wanted to leak his disappointment.

Another window into Kissinger's personality came during an exchange with ABC News's Ted Koppel, who asked Kissinger to come on the network's new "Today type program." (That, of course, would become "Good Morning America.") Kissinger responded, "It depends on who the girl is."

"A damn nice one, but she is in N.Y.," Koppel said. Kissinger later declined, citing another scheduled television interview. Koppel then grilled him on other matters.

Tom Blanton, director of the National Security Archive, also pointed to one conversation between Kissinger and Colby that's been almost completely redacted. It's curious because the same conversation had been made public by State in 2007.

"So something circulated as unclassified is now retroactively circulated as classified," he said. "The right hand doesn't know what the left hand does. The subjectivity in the system is so extreme."