

Letters to the Editor

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SIR: I refer to the letter of W. E. Colby, executive director of the Central Intelligence Agency, who rebutted the charges made by some American newspapermen that the CIA was involved in opium trafficking. I do not question Colby's good faith, neither do I say that the CIA, as an entity, traffics in opium; but, I am sorry to say that there is more to these charges than mere "gossip, conjecture and old history."

I also know what I am talking about because I was involved in security matters for the South Vietnamese government under President Ngo Dinh Diem. In effect, one day, the President told me to investigate into the activities of our chief of secret police, chief of our own "CIA" and chief of military security, and to report directly to him, because, as he put it: "I cannot ask my own chiefs of police, 'CIA,' and military security to investigate into themselves."

I found out the corruption of two chiefs, and the President took very drastic measures against them. I have kept the contact with my security agents ever since. They firmly confirm that a few CIA agents in Indochina are involved in opium trafficking. But above all, a line must be drawn between Indochina and the rest of the world, because, due to the fact of the counter-insurgency warfare, the operations of the American CIA in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are extremely important when they are compared to operations of the same agency in other countries. In Indochina, the CIA is a real army with his own aerial fleet. A number of CIA operatives deal directly with Vietnamese, Lao, or Meo warlords or officials at the highest level, with whom they share the proceeds of the opium traffic. For good American citizens in the United States, it is very difficult to imagine the influence and power of these operatives in Indochina. Their power, in fact, is unlimited—they are the true rulers of Indochina; their desires are orders—no Vietnamese, Laotian or Cambodian official would dare resist their orders. Corruption growing from a de facto power affects some of these CIA operatives.

The traffic of opium involves a relatively large number of persons. Outside a few Americans, there are Vietnamese, Laotians and Meo who are involved. Since these persons have their clans, families and friends who live from this traffic, the total number of persons concerned become so great that it is impossible to keep secret the operations.

I also do not question the good faith of CIA Director Richard Helms when he said that "as an agency, in fact, we are heavily engaged in tracing the foreign roots of the drug traffic for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. We hope we are helping with a solution; we know we are not contributing to the problem . . ." However, as I said previously, a line must be drawn and a distinction must be made; for circumstances are not the same—there is not the vaguest resemblance between CIA operatives in Indochina and their colleagues operating in other countries.

In conclusion, CIA Director Helms and Colby, Miss Randal, and McCoy said the truth and did not contradict one another; they perhaps did not talk about the same country.

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