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Michigan State U. Denies It Knowingly Aided CIA

East Lansing, Mich., April 22 (AP). The president of Michigan State University denied today that the University knowingly provided a front for the Central Intelligence Agency in South Vietnam.

The president, John A. Hannah, made the statement at a news conference called to answer charges by the monthly magazine *Ramparts* that the university allowed itself to be used as a cover for CIA agents while it was helping the Vietnamese Government from 1954 to 1962.

The magazine, which has been critical of United States policies in Vietnam, also contended that during the mission the university bought guns for the regime on then President Ngo Dinh Diem and violated the 1954 Geneva agreement limiting the military capability of both North and South Vietnam.

Spy Operation Denied

At the news conference, Hannah said: "Let me state without any reservations that Michigan State did not have a spy operation within its Vietnam project. It did not have CIA people operating under cover provided by the university, or in secret from the Vietnamese Government."

The university's assignment in part was to provide advice on setting up a civilian police organization, Hannah said.

He explained that it was clear from the beginning that President Diem was going to have serious trouble with subversion, and that the university hired several men who had a background of intelligence work.

"None of these at the time of employment were known by us to have affiliations with the CIA—nor did their records indicate that they ever had such a connection," Hannah added.

Suspicious Aroused

Later, he said, "some of our people became suspicious that some of these were CIA men—I don't know how, and we don't to this day know that they were—and we asked the American and Vietnamese Governments to let us out of the counter-subversive program."

The magazine charged that at least five CIA men were hired knowingly by the school's Vietnam project, and added that "the entire unit operated on an identical hear-no-CIA, see-no-CIA basis."

Last week, Dr. Ralph Smucker, acting dean of the university's international programs, said the International Control Commission, the enforcement agency for the Geneva agreement, "was aware of what we were doing and never filed any complaints."

Hannah's denial that the university knowingly hired CIA agents was challenged by the magazine's managing editor, Warren Hinkle, who dared Hannah to test the charges in court.

"President Hannah can make whatever statements he wishes but he is flatly contradicted by the facts and by his own professors and the official record of his project," Hinkle said in Menlo Park, Cal.

Shortly after the magazine was published, Dr. Wesley Fishel, professor of political science and onetime chief advisor for the project

in Vietnam asked the American Civil Liberties Union to aid him "in action for this defamation of my character and attempt to destroy my reputation as a scholar."

Hannah said a quick analysis of the magazine report "revealed no fewer than 53 errors of fact, not counting the gross distortions of statements quoted out of context."

The Vietnam project, Hannah said, employed 54 persons at its peak—about 36 of them from outside the university, with 23 of these police officers.

After the university asked to be let out of the counter-subversive program, he explained, the withdrawal took several months.

But by the fall of 1959, "we had reduced the size of our civil police administration division to eight persons—and this included five from our own Michigan State faculty," Hannah said.

In answer to *Ramparts'* query, "what the hell is a university doing buying guns anyway?" Hannah replied:

"Michigan State did not buy a single gun. Nor did it buy ammunition, nor handcuffs, nor any other police supplies."

Such supplies may have been requisitioned by United States agencies, but not by the school of police administration, he added.

Question Of Handling

Would the university do things differently this time? He was asked.

"We probably would handle things differently now. For instance, such international projects are now handled by the college involved—not the international division," he responded.

"But, it is unfair to look back now and say you would have done things differently, 1959—that was seven years ago. What looked to be wise once may not appear wise now," he added.

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