

19 November 1977



Newsday Photo by R. Scott Yarwood

CIA's Paul Chretien answers questions about the intelligence agency

CIA Visits Glen Cove

By Leonard Levitt

Glen Cove—On the stage sat a panel of Glen Cove High School teachers and students. A few feet away, the target of their sometimes mocking, often hostile questions, was a middle-aged man with horn-rimmed glasses, wearing a rumpled suit and unshined black shoes.

His name was Paul M. Chretien, and he is a senior briefing officer of the Central Intelligence Agency. Usually he talks to senior military and diplomatic officials about the agency's activities. He had come to Glen Cove as part of the school's Educational Enrichment Program which, according to a school brochure, brings to the school "professional people who are able to . . . give students and faculty a deeper insight and better understanding of . . . [their] organizations."

For nearly three hours yesterday, Chretien attempted to provide insight into and understanding of the CIA, though he refused to say in which overseas stations he'd served. He appeared unruffled, but underwent a grilling that he said left him "surprised and disturbed."

"People are bothered by the CIA's ill-advised illegal activities," began Donald Goodyear, a social studies instructor. "How can (former CIA Director) Richard Helms lie to the President and Congress? What about the lack of intelligence in Cuba during the Bay of Pigs and your inability to predict the Yom Kippur War in 1973?"

"Is it morally right for the CIA to have plotted to assassinate Fidel Castro?" 17-year-old Roger De Gennaro, the school valedictorian, asked. "If the CIA is concerned with foreign operations, why would they test mind-controlling drugs on its own civilians?" another student asked, sarcastically.

Chretien never raised his voice or showed emo-

tion as he attempted to answer all questions, some more successfully than others. Helms never lied to the President, he said. "The accusation was that he did not tell the whole truth to Congress." And assassinating Castro, he suggested, might have been preferable to sending six divisions to Cuba which might have led to the deaths of some 50,000 soldiers.

As to predicting wars, he said, "We are not a predicting divinity; we are an intelligence agency. We said if there was a war in the Middle East in 1967 it would last a week. It lasted six days. We said if there was a war in 1973 it would last two weeks. It lasted 12 days."

Why test mind-controlling drugs? "If you could control the mind of (Soviet Premier Leonid) Brezhnev it could be useful," he said, adding he felt the drug testing in the early 1950s "did get out of hand." "You have to understand the context of our times," he said. "No one at the time thought those actions were illegal or immoral. We were in a kind of war. We feared World War III."

"They were out to crucify you," teacher Bob Claybourne told Chretien after his talk. "Do you think you should spend more money on educating the public?"

"I think so," Chretien said.

The Washington Post

Washington—The Central Intelligence Agency accused Frank Snepp, a former CIA analyst who has written a book critical of the U.S. evacuation from South Vietnam, of violating his secrecy oath. Snepp, who was fired from the agency in 1976, relayed the charge to the Justice Department and Attorney General Griffin Bell said he had referred it to the civil division.