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Internationally known spy Copeland comes home to Birmingham

BY PEGGY ROBERSON
News staff writer

Miles Copeland, a Birmingham man who left the city as a youth to join the Army and became an internationally known spy, came home Tuesday night.

He will speak tonight to members of the Birmingham branch of the English Speaking Union at the Birmingham Country Club.

His second book, "Without Cloak or Dagger: The Truth about the New Espionage," is just off the press. In an airport interview Tuesday night, Copeland jokingly said he urged the CIA to censor it and assure its success, but they threatened to say they like it.

Copeland, 58, a big, tall, grey-haired man is warm and friendly and reviewers have described his writing style as "clear, funny and frank."

SOME OF THE insight he gives in the spy business isn't funny. He agrees that it would "scare hell out of you."

The current controversy over the CIA's role in the overthrow of Salvadore Al-

lende in Chile hit the news about the time Copeland's book hit the bookstores. Although he retired from the government in 1957, he cheerfully admits he "knew all about Chile," and is perfectly willing to talk about it.

His major criticism of the CIA in Chile is that "they didn't do enough." He explains that the U. S. superspys should have seen to it that one of Allende's "democratic" opponents won a majority in the election which put the pro-Soviet president in power.

Also, he says, the CIA pulled out too quickly and allowed a "military dictatorship" to take over.

COPELAND BELIEVES no country would voluntarily be Communist. For example, he says, the U. S. did not overthrow Allende—the CIA simply enabled the local citizens to "resist."

Career CIA officers are leaving the service in large numbers, Copeland said, because of pressure from the press and certain congressmen and senators.

He contends that the CIA involvement is not secret, but that any congressman who wants to can find out what's going on. He amends that slightly to say some—because of their leftist leanings — are not granted "security clearance" and thus might not be privy to some of the plans of the intelligence agency.

Copeland prefers that Americans not think the CIA is protecting "business interests," although he makes the point that the nation's interests and business interests are identical.

In addition, he said, all of the countries where Americans have invested and brought their technological know-how, have benefitted and prospered.

Copeland won his first job, with Gen. "Wild Bill" Donovan, through U. S. Sen. John Sparkman of Alabama. He was then in the Army and was placed on Donovan's staff as an information coordinator. He now lives in London, England, with his British-born wife.