

CIA vet rips agency

By Peter Annin
Of The State Journal

A 25-year veteran of the Central Intelligence Agency spoke against the CIA and its covert actions to about 50 people Sunday at the Pres House, 731 State St.

Ralph McGehee's appearance was sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and was the first event of Peace Week which started Sunday and will continue through next Sunday.

McGehee said, "The CIA has never been a central intelligence agency. Its intelligence in all cases is skewed to support whatever the administration wants."

'Misinformation'

"Misinformation is a major responsibility of the CIA and the American public is the major focus for this misinformation."

He cited a number of experiences he had while working with the CIA where the intelligence information he gathered was changed or distorted.

On a CIA assignment in Thailand during the Vietnam War years, he said, his job was to document the number of Communists in a particular region of Thailand. He said he eventually turned in a report listing about 2,000 members of the Communist Party of Thailand in the region.

He said the CIA then began to claim that there were only 2,500 Communists in the entire country, even though he had shown that there were at least 2,000 in just one of its provinces.

McGehee said the CIA purposefully underestimated the number of Communist Party members in Thailand and particularly in Vietnam during the war because the U.S. troops were supposed to be protecting the South Vietnamese from a Communist minority and, "If we had admitted that we were fighting against more than 50 percent of the population we would be in trouble."

Finally complained

He said that when he became "so furious and so fed up that I had to let out my anger" he complained to his superior — who put him on probation — and he was given an office job back in the United States.

"I left the agency in 1977 after finding it futile to protest from within."

McGehee charged the CIA has been involved in a number of Latin American countries.

Nicaragua: He said, "You have to understand what's going on now in the CIA. It's killing people in Nicaragua."

El Salvador: He said that CIA personnel compile lists of Communist Party members in El Salvador, similar to the work he was doing in Thailand. He said these lists eventually get into the hands of El Salvador's right-wing death squads.

The elections in El Salvador of Jose Napoleon Duarte were "manipulated by the CIA," he said. "If there is one thing that the CIA can do, it is rig an election."

Grenada: He said that weapons the U.S. troops found stockpiled in Grenada after the invasion were planted there by the CIA "to justify our intervention."

McGehee, who is the author of a book titled "Deadly Deceits" which he said contains documentation of his claims about the CIA, told the audience he is frequently the subject of intimidation tactics by the CIA.

"My phone has been tapped. My hotel rooms are routinely entered. They're doing all sorts of things and they're doing it not-so-sophisticatedly and I think for the sole purpose of intimidation."

He said that once he was talking on the telephone and a person monitoring the phone call began yelling at him.

"I have been the subject of seven different sting operations to get me to do something illegal."

Today's Peace Week events include a program from 7 to 9 p.m. called "What would a peaceful society look like and how can we get there?" at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Memorial Union.

And at 7:30 p.m., at the Pres House, "The Indian human rights struggle and non-violent social change: A shared progressive agenda."