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EX-STUDENT AIDES DEFEND SUBSIDIES

12 Leaders Say They Kept Independent Judgment

By STEVEN V. ROBERTS

Twelve former presidents of the National Student Association said yesterday that they had retained "the utmost vigilance and independence of judgment" while receiving as much as \$400,000 a year from the Central Intelligence Agency to operate their international program.

The former presidents noted that the association had consistently opposed official American foreign policy even while it was taking large subsidies from the Federal Government.

The statement issued yesterday was signed by every president—with one exception—who held office in the association between 1952, when the link with the intelligence agency was first forged, and 1964. The one exception was Richard J. Murphy, now Assistant Postmaster General, who declined to sign. He was president in 1952-53.

Stephen Robbins, president in 1964-65, is in the Army and could not be reached. The two most recent presidents, Philip Sherburne and W. Eugene Groves, have opposed the association's relationship with the intelligence agency.

Charges Are Recalled

The two most recent presidents and other ex-officials of the association have maintained that the intelligence agency did influence association policy. They insist that former presidents, some of whom either worked for the agency or were subsidized by it, tried to influence elections and occasionally association policy on such issues as the war in Vietnam.

The former presidents said in their statement that in the early nineteen-fifties the student association "recognized the vital importance of American student participation in international student affairs which otherwise would have been dominated by the well trained and well informed representatives of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union."

However, they said, "without substantial funds, N.S.A. international program would have been immobilized."

"Yet each of us concluded that, without question, we would have chosen immobilization if the only funds available

were devoted to impairment of the independence of any of N.S.A.'s programs," they said.

And so the question became whether C.I.A. funds entailed any such conditions. We state categorically that they did not. Allegations that we were 'trapped' or 'duped' are arrant nonsense."

Such charges have been made by present association officials.

The former presidents said that although they constantly sought other financing, "this relationship was the only realistic and responsible alternative available to us at that time."

Three Policy Areas Cited

In at least three important areas the association maintained an independent foreign policy that often conflicted with official views, the presidents said.

"N.S.A. consistently supported and sought to strengthen democratic student organizations in those countries where they existed and encouraged their formation where they did not exist."

"NSA's international policy early recognized the crucial importance which nationalist movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America would have in shaping our world."

"While we were quite aware of the expansionist ambitions and ideological goals of the Soviet Union, N.S.A. chose to deal with the Soviets and Eastern Europeans not as ideological pariahs but as political adversaries in a changing world."

The former officers noted that "political contexts change," and that what might have been a responsible course of action 15 years ago might not seem so to students today. They thus appeared to defend the decision of current leaders to break with the intelligence agency.

"We have always recognized," they said, "the responsibility of each group of current leaders of N.S.A. to lead the organization in the direction which seems to them appropriate during their term of office."

The twelve signers, and the year in which they left office are:

- William T. Dentzer Jr., 1952.
- James M. Edwards, 1954.
- Harry H. Lunn Jr., 1955.
- Stanford L. Glass, 1956.
- Harald C. Bakken, 1957.
- K. Ray Farabee, 1958.
- Robert R. Kiley, 1959.
- Donald A. Hoffman, 1960.
- Richard A. Rettig, 1961.
- Edward R. Garvey, 1962.
- W. Dennis Shaul, 1963.
- Gregory M. Gallo, 1964.

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