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File

Colby defends CIA amid jeering

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JERSEY CITY — Former Central Intelligence Agency Director William Colby defended his record and American spying yesterday at Jersey City State College in a speech disrupted by Iranian and other student militants.

"I think the fact that I don't come before you with a cloak, a stiletto, or a blonde says something about modern American intelligence," Colby said above the jeers from about two dozen protesters among the crowd of about 300 students and faculty.

The visit by the former CIA chief prompted unusual controversy on the normally quiet campus, but apart from heckling there were no incidents yesterday.

In recent weeks, several Iranians were forcibly removed from the campus for picketing without permission, students said. On Monday a student was charged after he reportedly smashed a window displaying an anti-Colby poster.

There are about 400 Iranian students among the 8,800 undergraduates at Jersey City State. A number of Iranian students have protested the CIA's role in establishing and aiding the government of Shah Mohammed Pahlavi, whom the protesters call a fascist.

But Colby, who received \$2,500 from the college for his appearance, said he believed American interests were better served by the present Iranian government than by that country's Communist party, which Colby said threatened Iran before the Shah seized power in a 1953 coup.

Conceding that the CIA had committed some abuses during the last 30 years, Colby insisted that he had personally halted and testified fully about all of them during his term as director from 1973-76. He said President Carter's recent executive order on U.S. intelligence needed congressional backing to define precisely what the CIA could do and how its secrets could be protected — "like a journalist's secrets," he said.

Cloak-and-dagger spying represented half of all CIA work in the 1950s, but only two per cent today, Colby said, because of great advances in technology and scholarship.

Vietnam and Watergate, Colby said, "made us all realize that there is no part of American government that can operate outside of American law."

However, because of foreign spying and the possibility of nuclear blackmail by small nations or terrorists, Colby said, American spying was just as necessary today as when Benjamin Franklin opened a dummy office in Paris in the 1770s to funnel arms to American revolutionaries.

To the students who compared Iranian rebels with American patriots and who criticized CIA activity in Chile, Africa, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic, Colby repeated that his testimony before a Senate investigating committee disclosed all relevant facts and showed no great wrongdoing by the CIA.

The CIA only supported center parties in Chile, except for six weeks, at President Nixon's order, funneling money to right-wing groups in an effort to unseat the elected communist president, Salvadore Allende, Colby said.

He told a Ghanaian student that the CIA never put into operation a plot to assassinate Congo President Patrice Lumumba, who was murdered in 1961, and that the CIA did not participate in the 1966 coup that deposed Ghana President Kwame Nkrumah.

Conceding that the CIA had trained some of Nkrumah's opponents, Colby maintained, "That does not mean the CIA participated in anything these people may later have done."

A black freshman, William Martin, congratulated Colby for his record, saying, "This man made it safe for me to walk the streets at night." But he was followed by David Blalock, an Army veteran who said he served in the Operation Phoenix program Colby headed in Vietnam, a "pacification" program that Blalock and others allude to was in fact methodical torture of suspected Viet Cong.

In a brief interview, Colby said he did not believe the claim by H.R. Haldeman in his recent book that the Soviet Union had approached the United States with a plan to attack Chinese nuclear bases. "I think I might well have heard," he said, "and I don't think the Russians would do that. . . though some people were concerned about the possibility of a Russian strike."

Colby said he had completed his own book on life within the CIA, which he said he had submitted to the CIA for clearance.

Of another book by a former CIA agent in Vietnam, Frank Snepp, who charged that the hasty American evacuation in 1975 betrayed many Vietnamese CIA operatives, Colby said, "It's very easy to Monday morning quarterback a chaotic, confused evacuation in a major defeat. . . even though some of those left behind were my friends."

"I was mainly sorry our country decided it would no longer send logistics and support [to Vietnam]," Colby added. "But we did manage to get all Americans and 130,000 Vietnamese out."