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CIA Whistleblower Tells Dark Side of Spying

By DENNIS RUDNER
Of The News Staff

ATHENS, Ohio — Espionage, dirty tricks, propaganda and covert actions — not to mention the thousands of lies. All in the average day for a Central Intelligence Agency agent, according to an ex-CIA agent.

John Stockwell stepped straight out from the pages of a James Bond spy thriller, to give a candid view of CIA recruiting and its operations to about 200 people at Ohio University Tuesday night.

Stockwell said he is the highest ranking CIA Agent ever to openly criticize the Agency.

After 13 years as a field agent in Africa and Vietnam, Stockwell saw what the agency stood for, and how U.S. lies were killing innocent people around the world. He had had enough of the "dirty tricks."

His book "In Search of Enemies," written following the United States' bungled attempts to "liberate" in

Angola, resulted in the CIA suing him, and seizing all profits from that publication.

Stockwell said that in reality it was the CIA that had invaded Angola. The Soviet Union, Red China and Cuba told the world the truth about what they were doing in Angola, The U.S. lied. We never suggested writing the truth."

"The beast," as Stockwell called the agency, survived and recruited agents on propaganda — "we couldn't trust the Russians. The CIA created and seized on that Soviet threat."

When the CIA contacted him to join, Stockwell said it was "like a magical dream. The agency was held in pretty good repute at that time (1954)."

The CIA recruited case agents who were the brightest and smartest. They lead dignified lives, Stockwell said. "They're not 9 feet tall with iron teeth."

At the time of his recruitment, Stockwell said he didn't know that 400 journalists were cooperating to put propaganda in newspapers or that 500 professors were cooperating to build files on students, or that the CIA had published 1,000 books stilted to the Agency's ideals.

"There were no rules for survival. Effective espionage was essential to subvert and destroy the enemy," he said.

Since its inception in 1947, the CIA has taken part in several hundred covert actions a year, Stockwell said, including:

- a 19-year secret war with China that included parachuting men inside China;
- installing the Shah of Iran to power, which led to 80,000 deaths from his secret police force, the Savak;
- Bay of Pigs invasion that shattered John F. Kennedy's hopes for glory.

There was no retaliation because "we had the bomb. Secrecy prevented us from hearing about it,"

Stockwell said.

Finally the lies and betrayal of those he worked with for two years in Vietnam forced Stockwell to re-evaluate his position with the agency. The CIA dumped Vietnamese agents in order to save "corrupt" leaders during the massive withdrawal from Vietnam in 1977.

"I can't describe how I felt," he said. He added it was like his soul had been raped.

A couple of months later he was "thunderstruck" when he was sent to Angola to help get a new government elected. But when the lies continued from the likes of New York Sen. Daniel Moynihan and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Stockwell decided to tell what the Central Intelligence Agency was all about.