

Argonaut

Tuesday
March 27, 1984
University of Idaho
89th Year, No. 51



"The CIA may have its problems, but it's never been the best of times."
—William Colby

"The CIA has been allowed to be exploited — particularly by the executive branch."
—Michael Harrington

"The main problem of the CIA is that it has no public control."
—Ralph McGehee

"I have many doubts about the CIA's future."
—Larry Birns

Borah Symposium

Former director Colby: CIA is valuable as intelligence arm

By Laura Hubbard

Arguments on how the CIA has been used politically, both in this country and abroad, and on its role in society headlined the first Borah Symposium panel discussion Monday evening.

Addressing a packed SUB Ballroom were speakers William Colby, Ralph McGehee, Michael Harrington and David Atlee Phillips. The moderator for the panel was Larry Birns, an expert on Latin America and director of the Council of Hemispheric Affairs.

Tonight's panel discussion will be a more detailed delving into that agency's activities in Latin America. It will include Monday's speakers as well as Emmanuel Cordera, a representative from the Nicaraguan embassy, and Jaime Barrios, a Chilean exile.

Colby, a former director of the CIA, stressed the agency's intelligence gathering capacities and said its goals were to replace fear and ignorance with knowledge and confidence.

However, while he focused mainly on the organization's ability to educate leaders, other speakers spoke primarily to the agency's use of misinformation and on how it has been used by the executive branch of the government.

Colby described how the CIA's role has changed over the years, tracing its evolution from strictly gathering and evaluating information to striving to serve the U.S. Constitution and the American people.

And while Congress has

final control over the CIA's covert activities, he said, the agency must in addition be concerned with providing the technology required to keep soldiers informed abroad.

"Today they (soldiers) don't stand there worried about some noise in the desert," he said.

He later concluded about the agency, "It may have its problems, but it's better than the rest of them."

McGehee, on the other hand, spoke of the CIA's providing of misinformation —

primarily that aimed at the American audience.

McGehee served for 25 years as a case officer on covert operations in the CIA. He has, since his retirement, been an outspoken critic of some of its policies.

"It has a schizophrenia in its charter," he said.

He charged that while politicians and agency chiefs talked of guerilla activity they ignored the grass roots, mass base of the communists in Vietnam.

See CIA, page 6

Former congressman calls U.S. covert action 'a disaster'

By Jane Roskams

The problem is the control of the spread of communism. Currently, the means is the CIA's covert actions. But does the means justify the end result?

Mike Harrington, Jaime Barrios, Ralph McGehee and Emmanuel Cordera don't think so. Bill Colby, however, admitted at a press conference hosted by the Borah Symposium Monday, that in the most part, he does.

Harrington, a former congressman, said, "I don't

agree with it (covert action) on the basis of what this country stands for. I certainly don't agree with it in terms of the results which are mixed and often disastrous."

He continued by saying that covert action is threatening the residual good will that exists globally towards the United States. "Any way you want to measure it, I call it a disaster."

Barrios, a Chilean exile, called covert action an

intolerable interference into the affairs of other countries. He charged that American action in the early 1970s changed Chile's history, a sentiment reflected by other speakers.

Birns, the director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, went into the problem in more depth.

He said the villains are not the technicians who carry out covert action but the political leaders that authorize it.

"The main problem about

covert action," Birns said, "is that it has a life of its own which occurs outside the dimensions of public knowledge, public debate and public control."

He referred to the problem the United States experienced with Chile's Allende government and said that covert action, by definition, is applied in order to stop the spread of subversion to other countries. Therefore, a government may follow any policy it wishes, provided it does not force its beliefs on

other countries.

President Allende was never accused of subversion. Yet at the same time former President Richard Nixon was publicly advocating control of subversion in Chile, he authorized intelligence services to corrupt and subvert Chile's democratically elected government.

Colby, on the other hand, defended use of covert action as the only means to solve some of the problems posed by other countries. It is

See DISASTER, page 8