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CIA Documentary

SIR: David Lawrence's column (May 6) in which he acts as an apologist for the CIA and impugns the patriotism of the National Broadcasting Co. for their documentary on the CIA, contains preposterous logic and reasoning.

Lawrence apparently would speed us to 1984 if we followed his advice. As a constitutional conservative, his double standard is most interesting. He sees nothing wrong with the Executive circumventing Congress and, in effect, declaring war anywhere he pleases. Throughout the column, Lawrence equates "cold war" with "hot war," and argues the fantastic position that it is the "duty" of the press to mislead and lie to the public if that will support our government's propaganda program. Since the "cold war" appears to be a permanent affair, it follows that henceforth the press (including television and radio) should never accurately report, probe or criticize our foreign policies.

Lawrence also states, incorrectly, that the NBC documentary implied the CIA operates entirely on its own. Nothing was asserted more clearly by the CIA spokesmen than the direct presidential involvement in all of the military actions by the CIA. (This, incidentally, merely shifts the question of the morality of our foreign interventions on the head of the President).

It is becoming more and more obvious that the CIA is a two-headed beast; one carrying out the legitimate and necessary function of intelligence-gathering, the other engaging in very dubious military adventures to the point of attempting to subvert and control foreign governments. The second, obviously, deserves the most thorough probing and questioning, since it is alien to our way of life.

My hat is off to NBC for a very informative and highly important documentary bearing on the future of democracy.

Richard Hall.