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The New Orleans States-Item is an afternoon newspaper. It prints the news impartially. It supports what it believes to be right. It opposes what it believes to be wrong without regard to party politics.

CIA Pops Up All Over the Place

The Central Intelligence Agency, the nation's super-secret cloak and dagger outfit, has been called an "invisible government," accountable to virtually no one and operating with almost complete autonomy outside the established channels of foreign policy, specifically the State Department.

Since the revelation of its role in the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion, however, the agency has been in the news more and more.

It has been criticized in two best-selling books, magazine articles and newspapers for fomenting revolution abroad, attempting to infiltrate the Peace Corps and of using at least one university, Michigan State, as a front for its operations in Vietnam.

Now comes an admission from the administration in Washington that the agency has been secretly subsidizing for 15 years the largest, oldest and perhaps most respected student organization in the nation, the National Student Assn., principally, it seems, to get across the United States viewpoint as opposed to the Communist at international student gatherings.

The latest flap, touched off by an article in the forthcoming issue of Ramparts, a Catholic lay magazine,

prompted the President himself to intervene in the controversy.

Mr. Johnson has delegated to Undersecretary of State Nicholas Katzenbach the task of carefully reviewing any governmental activity which might compromise the integrity of educational groups.

Fully aware of the political implications of the controversy in a democratic society, the President also has called on key administration officials, including CIA director Richard Helms, who was in New Orleans this week, to formulate a policy to guide the government in its "relationships to the international activities of American education organizations."

We believe such guidelines are necessary.

For while it is true that there are two congressional committees charged with overseeing the CIA, it is also true that this supervision has been weak.

Undercover operations, while not particularly palatable in a democratic society, nonetheless are a stark reality of the Cold War era.

Reality or not, they should be closely supervised, lest the integrity of our democratic form of government itself be lost.