

Post *2/15/67* Clumsy Cupidity

It would be difficult to devise a report more likely to disgust, dismay and distress Americans than the disclosure that the Central Intelligence Agency has for ten years been secretly subsidizing the National Student Association.

This maladroitness maneuver has reduced all the scholarly and professional groups of America, in their standing before the world, to the ranks of the suspected. It has diminished their credibility at home and abroad. What the CIA did was inexcusable and indefensible, not just because it was immoral and corrupt, but because, besides, it was futile and counter-productive.

The Government can partly repair this damage by a policy declaration from the White House announcing that hereafter no agency of the Government will prejudice the independence and objectivity of private associations and groups by secret subventions.

This done, we can set about devising the right way to handle appropriate financial aids for these associations when this country needs to be represented abroad. And it must be remembered that in the '50s it did especially need representation at meetings of international bodies which the Communists tried (and often succeeded) in cap-

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1967 PAGE A18

turing. The principle with which to begin is candor. The first thing to avoid is secrecy and dishonesty.

The whole episode reminds the Nation again that the CIA ought to be limited to gathering intelligence. Its confusion of purpose violates every principle of prudent administration. Its functions are conflicting and incompatible. Let it confine itself to its central mission. If in this hard and naughty world we need covert operations, let them be given, on an ad hoc basis, to other agencies of government directly under the highest supervision.

The Government simply must take steps to protect this country against an organization whose clumsy cupidity has brought down upon us embarrassment at home and humiliation abroad.