

Michigan State Denies Proof of Viet Spy Role

By Phil Brown

LANSING, Mich., May 16 (AP)—Two magazine-writers and Michigan State University officials debated before seven State legislators today whether the university was a front for U.S. spies in Vietnam.

John Hannah, Michigan State president, testified that it still has not been proved that anyone connected with an MSU advisory mission to South Vietnam was a Central Intelligence Agency operative. There was only a suspicion, he said.

MSU halted countersubversion training for Vietnamese police because, he said, "we were convinced a university shouldn't place itself under suspicion."

The school helped train Vietnamese police and other government employes under a Federal Government contract. MSU advisers were in Vietnam from 1955 to 1962, although the size of the mission was reduced from a peak of 54 members to just eight in 1959.

Stands Behind Charges

Warren Hinckle III, author of a Ramparts magazine article that called MSU a "university on the make," stood behind charges it made that Michigan State had served as a CIA front.

"A university shouldn't become an extension of any government," Hinckle told the legislature committee. "It should be a citadel of academic research."

"We disapprove of their work because it allowed a dictatorship to be established in Vietnam. They were the independent observers there. If we can't trust independent academic observers . . ."

Rep. Jack Faxon (D-Detroit),

chairman of the committee, said the group would try to issue a report in about six weeks, "and bring the conflicting statements into some kind of harmony."

Hinckle said Senators and members of the MSU staff have contradicted Hannah.

Faxon said he believed Hannah was "technically correct" that it was uncertain that there ever were CIA men with the mission.

Seeks Information

He said he plans to try to obtain concrete evidence "from an agency that actually knows." He already has written to Sen. Leverett Saltonstall (R-Mass.), and Secretary of State Dean Rusk, he said.

One object of the committee hearing, Faxon indicated, was to develop guidelines for overseas projects by Michigan universities.

"We want to be in a position where we won't get stuck with a Vietnam again," he told newsmen.

Hannah said MSU, learning from the 1955-62 overseas mission, had already changed procedure. The school will now limit its overseas projects to educational programs involving universities or education ministries overseas, he said.

"We have reorganized ourselves on the campus so decisions (on an overseas project) are made by the people who will have to live with and staff it," said Hannah.

Seemed Wise, He Says

MSU's decision in starting the technical aid mission in 1955 "at the time seemed to be wise," he said.

Arguing that MSU had tried to hide nothing, Hannah said the school channeled \$5000 in foundation money to encourage two MSU faculty mem-

bers to publish a book on the mission, which turned out to be critical. "So that there might be a complete record."

Stanley Scheinbaum, one-time on-campus coordinator of the MSU aid mission in Vietnam, told legislators he was advised on taking his position that he should not expect to be made aware of the activities of the CIA men in the mission.

Hannah told the committee that the men hired by MSU to teach countersubversion "during the usual working hours were working with us."

The men were hired in the first place, he said, because MSU's police administration school had no specialists in countersubversion.

Record of Link Denied

"I defy anybody to see anything in their records to show a connection with the CIA," he said.

But, Hannah added, "not long after the mission got started, our people became convinced these people had CIA affiliations."

"We decided this was something we should get out of, that it was too tricky for a university to handle," he said.

Hannah and the Ramparts writers disagreed again on whether MSU bought arms and ammunition for the South Vietnamese regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. Hannah said the MSU mission never bought munitions, but advised on what supplies would be needed.

Faxon asked whether filling out a list of supplies needed might not be considered part of the purchasing process. Hannah said he would insist on a strict interpretation of the word "purchase."