

CIA's double-agent plan

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WASHINGTON — The CIA infiltrated the U.S. antiwar movement in an effort to get its own men — masquerading as radicals — recruited by Soviet intelligence, a former deputy CIA director said yesterday.

Describing the double-agent gambit as "an error in judgment," Ray S. Cline said the agency did it because Presidents Johnson and Nixon were "absolutely obsessed" with the belief that the Russians were manipulating the Vietnam protests.

The CIA apparently was never able to establish a "Russian connection" within the U.S. dissident movement. It is now under inves-

tigation itself, to determine whether it broke the law by spying on Americans.

Cline, a CIA employe for 27 years and a deputy director from 1962 to 1966, disclosed details of the agency's infiltration operations in an interview which enlarged on information already made public by CIA Director William E. Colby.

Cline said the counterspy operation — in which one intelligence agency puts out an agent as "bait" to be recruited by a rival agency, and to work within it as a double-agent — appeared at the time to be "a classical counter-espionage operation." Now, he said, he considers it "an error in judgment."

"Since it involved penetration of an American organization, its purpose was ambiguous and therefore subject to criticism," he said.

But he added: "I know from my own recollection that both Presidents Johnson and Nixon were absolutely obsessed with the subject and pressed all government agencies to find this vital connection of foreign activation."

Cline said the CIA over the years undoubtedly had committed other "errors of judgment" in its U.S. activities. He cited mail opening operations, wire-tapping, and three instances of entering without a search warrant, described by Colby in his testimony before a Senate committee.