

MICHIGAN STATE DEFENDS PROJECT

Hannah Denies C.I.A. 'Cover'
Was Knowingly Provided

By WALTER RUGABERE

Special to The New York Times

EAST LANSING, Mich., April 22—Dr. John A. Hannah, president of Michigan State University, issued an elaborate defense today of the school's role in a South Vietnam aid program.

In a 3,500-word statement, Dr. Hannah denied that Michigan State had a "spy operation" within its Vietnam operations between 1955 and 1959 or that operatives of the Central Intelligence Agency had worked under a "cover" provided by the university.

But, in a long news conference, Dr. Hannah acknowledged that the university had "suspicions" that its staff in Vietnam included agents of the C.I.A. Dr. Hannah added that he thought the suspicions were "well-founded."

Assailed by Magazine

Ramparts magazine, a West Coast publication founded by Roman Catholic laymen, charged last week that the Michigan State project was merely a cover for a C.I.A. team on "counter espionage and counter intelligence" assignments.

In effect, Dr. Hannah today admitted that intelligence agents could have infiltrated the Michigan State project, but denied that the school knowingly provided the base for C.I.A. operation.

Dr. Hannah explained that Michigan State, in its effort to strengthen South Vietnamese police services, needed "individuals capable of carrying out advisory and training assignments in several specialized areas," including "counter-subversion."

The countersubversion specialists required, Dr. Hannah continued, could be recruited only from Government agencies. Michigan State hired people with "a background in intelligence work for the United States Government," he said.

Says C.I.A. Was Avoided

Dr. Hannah said at his news conference that the counter-subversion specialists had been recruited from agencies other than the C.I.A. He refused to specify them, but it was later reported that they had come from the Department of the Army.

The university president was asked why the C.I.A. was avoided by the Michigan State recruiters. He said he supposed it was because the university felt that people with the C.I.A. at one time might still have "some connections."

Dr. Hannah suggested that "there have been too few questions asked about the motives of the authors of the Ramparts article and of the magazine itself." He continued:



REPLIES TO ARTICLE:
John A. Hannah, president of Michigan State University, responded to Ramparts magazine piece about M.S.U. magazine piece about an M.S.U. program and C.I.A.

"We know that Ramparts magazine has been extremely critical of U. S. policy in Vietnam. This is the publisher's privilege, but he is not privileged to use this university as his whipping boy."

Dr. Hannah said that one member of the "writing team," Stanley K. Sheinbaum, "left this university in a very unhappy mood." Mr. Sheinbaum was coordinator of Michigan State's Vietnam project.

The Ramparts article was signed: "By Warren Hinckle in conjunction with Research Editor Sol Stern and Foreign Editor Robert Scheer." Mr. Hinckle is managing editor.

Editor Challenges Hannah

MENLO PARK, Calif., April 22 (AP)—Mr. Hinckle said today every one of the charges made in the article was accurate.

"We challenge President John Hannah to test the charges in a court of law if they have the nerve to claim that these are not the facts," he declared.

Mr. Hinckle said he had written the article and that the research had been done by three other Ramparts staff members, including Mr. Sheinbaum.