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Lieut. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, testifying before the House committee on intelligence in Washington yesterday.

U.S. Intelligence Chiefs Deny Falsifying Vietnam Troop Data

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3 (UPI) —The outgoing civilian and military intelligence directors denied today that there was a conspiracy to downgrade Communist troop strength in Vietnam before the 1968 Tet offensive.

William E. Colby, director of Central Intelligence, told the House Intelligence Committee that the C.I.A. insisted at the time that the Vietcong had 500,000 or more men, compared with a military estimate of 292,000.

Lieut. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, who is seeking early retirement as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, testified that United States military leaders were not surprised by the intensity of the Tet attack, which killed 2,200 Americans and destroyed 58 aircraft.

Both men took issue with statements by Samuel A. Adams, a former C.I.A. agent, who told the committee in September that the agency and the military deliberately falsified Communist strength to make it appear the allies were winning the war.

Mr. Colby, in prepared testimony, said the C.I.A. prepared a special assessment for Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara in May 1967 that concluded "the over-all strength of the Communists' organized force structure in South Viet-

nam is probably in the 500,000 range and may even be higher."

"The 500,000 figure presented by the C.I.A. in this report could be compared with an official military number at that time of 292,000," Mr. Colby said. "I believe that these quotations from official C.I.A. publications show clearly that the C.I.A. did not shrink from pushing the case for higher figures, and made no attempt to produce 'politically acceptable' estimates."

Mr. Adams testified that the Vietcong had 600,000 troops at the time, along with 30,000 spies in the South Vietnamese military, and that this fact was concealed from the public by the C.I.A. and the military. Mr. Colby and Mr. Graham said that testimony was erroneous and misleading.

Mr. Graham, who preceded Mr. Colby to the witness table, said it was estimated after the Tet offensive that the Vietcong had a force of only 170,000 men and that not all of them could have taken part.

Mr. Colby, who is continuing as C.I.A. chief until his designated successor, George Bush, goes through the Senate confirmation process, was once in charge of the agency's "Phoenix" program designed to wipe out Vietcong double agents and South Vietnamese collaborators.