By Michael Potter

William Colby, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), addressed a capacity crowd in Room 10-250 Wednesday night on the subject, "The World of the 1980's: Intelligence Looks Ahead."

Colby first cited three major changes that have occurred in American intelligence since World War II. He said that a core of scholars was organized to coordinate and analyze information. There are "many people" with doctor's and master's [degree] in the CIA than on the faculties of most universities," he noted. The application of technology to intelligence has also become of particular importance. During the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the President was able to negotiate from a knowledgeable vantage point, because he possessed aerial reconnaissance photographs, according to Colby. "The third major change is that intelligence would never work within the law," he explained. The balance between reality and constitutional requirements is a great concern to the CIA.

The former Director explained that the old conception of a "closed organization, responsible only to the President has changed." He said that the public, detailed, explicit, authoritative explanation of what the intelligence agencies do is produced, he said, by two Congressional committees overseeing the CIA.

On the subject of nuclear arms control, Colby said, "I supported the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) negotiations. Through our intelligence, we are able to negotiate from a position of power."

Colby then commented on the current threat posed by covert action. "We can be sure that the old conception of a 'black box' is a great concern to the CIA," he said. The CIA has solid information; we can be sure of the existence of covert weaponry during the SALT negotiations because the CIA has the right information." "Intelligence provides the public with knowledge so they can discern the problem," he noted.

Colby then commented on the threat of covert action which he believes might occur. Funds to central political parties in Europe during the 1950's were provided by the CIA, according to him.

Colby believes that there are two general principles which should be followed in covert action: the actions should be in defense of the interests of the US and the means used should be proportional to the threat. "We don't have to sit idly by while the situation deteriorates to the point where we are asked to send in the Marines," he commented.

At a reception before the lecture, Colby discussed CIA actions in Chile. "We began to help the left in Chile in 1970, he won only 35 percent of the vote, requiring ratifications of his leadership. According to Colby, "The President of the [United States] told the CIA to go down and stop ratifications. For six weeks, CIA did go down and tried and failed, then tried to sustain the leftist parties."

When asked about the overthrow of Allende, Colby replied, "That was not a CIA coup."

Colby also discussed US policy toward El Salvador. "For the moment, the government is doing what it should -- providing minimal economic and, political aid and supporting the land reform program of the present regime," he contended.

The lecture was sponsored by the United Nations Association (UNA) of Greater Boston, the MIT Lecture Series Committee, and the MIT International Relations Club. The UNA is an independent organization which promotes interest in international affairs.

Former Director of the CIA William Colby lecturing in 10-250 Wednesday night. (Photo by Todd Bayer)