

DRAFT 5/9/75

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: PHIL BUCHEN  
HENRY KISSINGER  
JACK MARSH  
DON RUMSFELD

SUBJECT: Request of the Senate Select  
Committee on Intelligence Activities  
for Information on Covert Actions



The Senate Select Committee has requested CIA Director Colby to testify on covert actions next Wednesday, May 14. The ground rules are not yet established, but it is clear that the Senators are interested in learning the details of specific covert operations. This subject is one of great concern to the Senators -- indeed, some of the Select Committee members, including Chairman Frank Church, have already publicly questioned the appropriateness of covert action. The Committee staff -- which is quite large and rather aggressive -- has also been pressing on many fronts for details of covert actions and numerous documents with respect to specific operations.

Instead of briefing the full Select Committee at this early stage, we propose that Mr. Colby be authorized to orally brief the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Senators Church and Tower. Your approval is sought for a briefing that would include (1) covert action generally, and, if necessary, (2) the details of a limited number of specific covert operations.

Whitman: Robert K. Whitman files: Subject series, b. 2, f. "Int'l Investigations - Church Com (1)." Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

1. Covert action generally

We propose that Mr. Colby be authorized to orally brief Senators Church and Tower with respect to the following general aspects of covert action:

- o The rationale for covert actions
- o The relationship of covert operations to national security
- o The importance of keeping covert action secret in order to preserve its effectiveness and prevent adverse affects on our foreign relations
- o The decision-making process and the internal procedures utilized in planning, conducting and evaluating covert operations



APPROVE: \_\_\_\_\_

DISAPPROVE: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Specific Covert Operations

The NSC feels that discussion of specific operations should be avoided, and that the subject should be handled on a "realistic hypotheticals" basis, omitting names, dates and other details. It is likely, however, that Senators Church and Tower will press for details of specific operations. In this event, we recommend that Mr. Colby be

authorized to discuss fully with Senators Tower and Church a limited number of specific covert actions. The advantages and disadvantages of this course of action are as follows:

Advantages:

- o       Accords with our general approach of candor and cooperation with respect to the Congressional reviews
- o       Oral briefing preferable to requests for documents
- o       A detailed explanation of specific covert actions -- including the extent of Presidential and Cabinet involvement and the degree of Congressional notification and acquiescence in specific actions -- will alert the Senators to the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved, and hopefully encourage a non-partisan and responsible treatment of these matters
- o       May help in later resisting requests for specific documentation; useful to have



done if we later have to draw the line

- o "Precedent" not particularly harmful since approach of orally briefing Chairman and Ranking Minority Member on covert actions commonly used with Armed Forces and Appropriations Subcommittees of House and Senate
- o Danger of leaks minimized by oral briefing
- o May satisfy their "curiosity"

Disadvantages:

- o Strong possibility that Senators Church and Tower will not be able to resist demands by the rest of the Committee members -- and some Committee Staff -- for a similar briefing (which we would probably regard as unacceptable)
- o In current atmosphere of distrust and suspicion of the Executive Branch,



subsequent demands for underlying documents likely anyway

- o May only serve to whet their curiosity

RECOMMENDATION:

That Mr. Colby be authorized to discuss in detail a limited number of specific covert actions. If you accept this recommendation, we would limit the discussion to items on the list in Tab A.

APPROVE: \_\_\_\_\_

DISAPPROVE: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_



DRAFT - 5/9/75

Soviet Union, 1947 to present

Greece, since 1947

Korea, 1950-1952

Indonesia, 1957-1958

Cuba, 1960-1961

Vietnam, 1960-1964

Laos, 1960-1964

Congo, 1963-1966

Chile, 1961-1971

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Katzenbach report, 1967

Current operations (general types, scope and objectives only)

