

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *Def.*

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 4, 1975

PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH SENATORS
FRANK CHURCH (D-IDAHO) AND JOHN TOWER (R-TEXAS)

Wednesday, March 5, 1975

10:00-10:30 a.m. (30 minutes)

The Oval Office

Through: Max L. Friedersdorf

From: Patrick E. O'Donnell *POD m-b*

I. PURPOSE

To discuss matters involving the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

A. Background:

1. The Senate Select Committee has unanimously agreed that Senators Church and Tower, the Chairman and Vice Chairman, respectively, should seek this meeting with the President.
2. They want to discuss the Committee's views as to the broad purposes and objectives of the Committee's inquiries into the intelligence activities of the United States Government.
3. The Senators will request the President's full cooperation in enabling the Select Committee to fulfill its mandate and, of course, will want to hear the President's views.

B. Participants: See Tab A

C. Press Plan: White House Photographer only.

III. TALKING POINTS

To be provided by National Security Council (See Tab B)



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Ford Papers: Prez' Handwriting File: Natl Security Svcs, b. 30, f. 'Int'l (2)'

PARTICIPANTS

The President

SENATE

Senator Frank Church (D-Idaho)

Senator John Tower (R-Texas)

STAFF

Jack Marsh

Max Friedersdorf

General Scowcroft

Bill Kendall

Patrick O'Donnell

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III. TALKING POINTS

1. I am very happy to have the opportunity to discuss a subject which is of great importance to this country.
2. I want to cooperate with your investigation of the intelligence community. It is essential, however, that in the process of examining the allegations of impropriety which have been made, we not cripple the effectiveness of the institutions which are so critically important to the very survival of this country.
3. Willful wrongdoing cannot be tolerated. We must make it clear that we expect our intelligence agencies and their personnel to operate within their charters and statutes and in conformity with the dictates of a free society. At the same time, we must be careful that we do not create the impression among loyal dedicated intelligence personnel that their heads may be on the block in later years for actions they undertook in the belief they were serving their country to the best of their ability. Should such an impression ever gain currency, the CIA would be reduced to the level of a newspaper clipping and filing service.
4. We have, in addition, to concern ourselves with the impact around the world of our investigations. We must not expose before our opponents -- or even our friends -- our successes and failures, our strengths and weaknesses, our methods and operations. We are a great power and it is important that we be perceived as such -- that our intelligence capability to a certain extent be cloaked in mystery and held in awe. Disclosures would be disastrous -- our successes would provide opponents with means to counter us in the future; our failures would reveal our impotence -- and both would embarrass or endanger foreign individuals, institutions and governments.
5. We must, then, tread very carefully between the need to discover and correct any errors of behavior in the past and the requirement to preserve and protect a vital national asset for the future. Our purpose must be to preserve and enhance the confidence of the American people in their intelligence organizations. Our methods must be such that we do not destroy the effectiveness of these institutions in the process.



6. I believe it essential, therefore, that we work out a system for determining the material required for the purposes of your inquiry and for providing adequate safeguards for that material which is to be provided.
7. This is not the occasion to discuss specifics regarding the sensitivity of the data involved, the needs of the committee, or other aspects which will have to be worked out. As I said at the outset, the Executive Branch will cooperate, with the understanding that there will be adequate security procedures for the committee and its staff and that there is a presumption against providing sensitive material not indispensably material to the inquiry.

FYI Cautionary Notes

- (1) It is important that you not commit yourself either to cooperate fully or to provide any specific categories of information.
- (2) You should avoid negotiating with the Senators or dealing in specifics.
- (3) If asked about waiving Executive Privilege, you should not agree, but simply say you will consider each matter as it comes to you.
- (4) If asked about providing the Rockefeller Commission report to the Committee, you should say the Commission expects to complete its work at an early date and you would want to look at the report before making a commitment.

