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THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH
WASHINGTONSECRET/SENSITIVE

October 20, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

As a result of an agreement between Mr. Buchen and the Senate Select Committee counsel, Mr. Schwarz, I read the draft report of the Committee on US involvement in assassinations of foreign leaders.

In my view the Report should not be published in full.

It will do irreparable damage to the reputation of the United States, not because of the findings on assassination, but because of the infinite detail that is presented about the inner workings of the Executive branch on a subject matter that was never at the forefront of high level concern. By taking a broad approach to the problem and rehearsing in great detail the flow of documentation and discussions, the impression is created that the US was preoccupied with plotting the removal of foreign leaders, whereas the report itself finds that in two cases out of five this plotting was actually carried on, but at a middle level, with no Presidential approval.

-- The report repeatedly strains to find some evidence that there might in fact have been approval at the Presidential level; in doing so, the report handles much of the evidence in a highly dubious manner: for example, giving equal weight to one single witness 15 years after the fact, to draw an ambiguous conclusion about Presidential approval casts doubt on the report's purpose.

In fact, the report concludes that in three cases examined there is no direct evidence that the US at any level engaged in plotting of assassination. Thus, the question is raised why any detail should be presented in these instances. By presenting considerable material in these three cases, nothing constructive is accomplished; in two cases, there are revelations about covert programs, even though their relevance is tangential.

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TAB C

DECLASSIFIED JPM Assass. Rec. Collection Act of 1992

Declassified Photocopy from Gerald R. Ford Library

JFK 1781000 4/10/20
NARA date 5/24/00 By KSH
GRFP: WHQns: Richard A. Quinlan, Intel Series, b. 7, f. 1, Rpt on CIA Assass Plots (2).

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Thus, the presentation of the full report rather than, say, the findings and conclusions, will only offer material for anti-American elements abroad who will find a vast reservoir of both trivia and more significant documentation to indict the US. Since very little of the evidence cited is needed to prove the overall conclusions, the release of this minutia serves no legislative or foreign policy purpose, nor would restricting it to a classified report prevent the American people from learning the Committee's findings.

Moreover, the report makes only a feeble effort to protect the privacy or personal reputation of the personnel interviewed, or those that appear in the documentation. There is a danger of retaliation for many of the officials. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to disentangle testimony from documentation. It would be a monumental effort to purge the report of documents supplied from the Executive branch and, of course, the testimony was taken by the Committee on the basis of this documentation.

Another issue is not whether such information should remain classified, but whether its release creates a precedent that is tolerable in Congressional-Executive relations. Thus, if some future committee claims that it can release NSC minutes, memoranda of conversation with the President, Presidential directives, minutes of the 40 Committee -- the potential for damage to our foreign relations is without bounds.

At a very minimum, if the report is released, it ought to be established that no precedent is created. After the publication of this report no government or political group will have any confidence that they can enter into a confidential relationship with the US on matters of great sensitivity. The decision to reveal, not the narrow basis for assassination, but a broad range of our actions in other countries, including operations of only five years ago, will have to be read by any current or future group desiring any US assistance as a clear liability.

Finally, there is the impact on current foreign relations: (1) damage to the US in Latin America, where three of the investigations are concerned, but only one involves an actual assassination plot; (2) damage in Africa (Zaire) where some of the people discussed are still alive and in power, and cooperating with the US.

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In sum, it is impossible to see how a positive purpose is served by releasing the report in its full detail. The findings could easily stand alone, and their release would meet the Committee's charge to investigate assassination plots. To release all of the report as an unclassified document would needlessly and recklessly damage the United States. To quote from the Committee's Chairman, in one of his interrogations of Ambassador Helms: "...since these secrets are bound to come out, when they do, they do very grave political damage to the United States in the world at large... revelations will then do serious injury to the good name and reputation of the United States." The argument for non-release could not be better summarized than in this statement of Senator Church.

WGH :
William G. Hyland

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