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Richard Cheney Files: Intel Series, b. 8, f. "Rockefeller Com Rpt: General."
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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 4, 1975

AGENDA

The transmission of the Rockefeller Commission Report to the President on Friday, June 6, raises several questions of policy and procedure which should be addressed today and resolved prior to the actual transmission. The significance of the matter is heightened by the comments in the report concerning assassination:

"The Commission staff began its required inquiry but time did not permit a full investigation before this report was due. The President therefore requested that the material in the possession of the Commission which bear on these all be turned over to him. This has been done."

And, by the widespread reports (see Washington Post edition, Tab A) that the full report, including assassination matters, will be made public for Sunday's papers.

Specifically, the issues for resolution are:

(1) When will the Rockefeller report be made public?

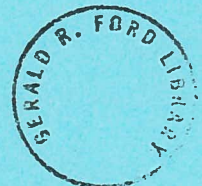
(2) What should the President say to reassure the public, at the time of releasing the report, that there will be a full understanding of the implication of the alleged assassination planning.

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(3) When should the President make a definitive statement on related matters:

- (a) Congressional investigation
- (b) Alleged assassination plans.
- (c) Steps to be taken with respect to Rockefeller Commission recommendations.
- (d) "Leaks" of security information, e.g., the Sy Hersh story.



Comparison Between Rockefeller Commission Report
and Other Executive Branch Material

The Rockefeller Commission Report, which is due this Friday, June 6, will not contain any discussion of "assassination plots." Rather, it will state only that the materials in its possession which bear on the allegations of CIA involvement in plans to assassinate certain foreign leaders will be turned over to the President. These materials pertain primarily to Castro and Trujillo.

In fact, the materials accumulated by the Rockefeller Commission add very little to the internal reviews of the same matters conducted by the CIA's Inspector General in 1967. They contain very little discussion of the involvement of officials outside the CIA. They go beyond the 1967 Inspector General's reports only in the following respects:

- o The Commission materials contain a limited analysis of the August 10, 1962 Special Group Augmented meeting on Operation Mongoose. The Commission has also interviewed Robert McNamara, General Edward Lansdale, Maxwell Taylor, John McCone and others with respect to that meeting.
- o The Commission has materials indicating that Robert Kennedy knew of CIA-Mafia actions against Castro in 1961, a year before he was again briefed by the CIA on the same

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By KBH NARA, Date 3/24/93

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matters. The CIA Inspector General was unaware of these matters at the time the 1967 reports were done.

The Church Committee is aware of the 1967 Inspector General reports and has been provided with a sanitized version of at least the report on Castro. The Senate Committee also has copies of the 1961 documents concerning Robert Kennedy. In short, the Church Committee is already aware of virtually everything contained in the Rockefeller Commission materials.

However, the materials compiled by the Rockefeller Commission provide only a partial history. They focus on the CIA's involvement in the assassination plots, but contain very little with respect to the involvement of others in the Executive Branch. Standing alone, they create the impression that the CIA was largely acting alone in these matters -- particularly in the case of Castro, less so in the case of Trujillo.

The record of involvement of others in the Executive Branch on the Castro matter is contained almost entirely in the minutes and other records of the Special Group Augmented concerning Operation Mongoose. These materials consist of three file jackets, each about an inch or two thick. Other materials relative to the "assassination" matter are contained in a few minutes of National Security Council meetings and regular

Special Group (5412 Committee) records. The Defense Department has records on other aspects of Operation Mongoose, and the State Department has a number of materials relating to Trujillo. In view of the recent statements of General Lansdale, the Senate Committee is familiar with the terms "Special Group Augmented" and "Operation Mongoose," and will undoubtedly seek to obtain White House and other records with respect to those items. The Committee will also seek all documents pertaining to Trujillo.

To provide the Senate Select Committee with the Rockefeller Commission materials without the other materials -- particularly the Operation Mongoose files -- is to provide a partial -- and somewhat misleading -- record. However, providing the Special Group Augmented/Mongoose materials raises significant policy and practical problems:

- o It would be an unprecedented act; the minutes and other records of covert action groups have never been provided to any Congressional group under any circumstances.
- o There are incalculable diplomatic ramifications should any of the documents leak.
- o There are incalculable dangers to reputations of former officials of the Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations; some of the individuals are now associated with major

international institutions (the World Bank and the Ford Foundation) which could be irreparably injured by unfair association with "assassination plots" or charges of improper connections with the CIA.

Accordingly, the procedure by which the Congress is apprised of these matters is just as important -- if not more so -- as the substantive decision to provide or not provide the materials. In this connection, it is obviously impossible for the President to refuse to provide either the Rockefeller Commission materials or the Special Group Augmented materials. Taken as granted that he must apprise the Congress in some way of these matters, there are only two options by which this can be accomplished:

1. Provide access to all of the materials at once, at the White House under controlled circumstances, with no copies permitted to leave the White House; or
2. Respond to individual document requests on a case-by-case basis.

OPTION I: Provide access to the materials all at once.

Under this option, the President would invite members of the Senate Select Committee (and perhaps the Nedzi Committee and other Congressional

leaders as well, including Speaker Albert, House Majority Leader O'Neill, and Minority Leader Rhodes; Senate Majority Leader Mansfield and Minority Leader Scott; and possibly additional Senators or Congressmen as appropriate from the Armed Services or Foreign Relations Committees) to review the documentary evidence at one session at the White House. The members would be apprised in advance of the ground rules. At the end of the review, it is possible that the joint statement might be issued or, alternatively, a statement by the President concurred in by the Congressional leadership.

ADVANTAGES:

- o Gets everything out on the table at once.
- o Given the nature of the materials, it is likely that there will be unanimity that further investigation or official comment on the subject of assassination is inappropriate.
- o Provides a basis for subsequent refusals to provide copies of individual documents to the Congressional Committees.

DISADVANTAGES:

- o Press and individual Congressmen may charge "conspiracy" to "cover-up."

- o Individual Senators or Congressmen might issue their own statements at variance with the group consensus.
- o Might establish a precedent for handling of other very sensitive materials, particularly specific covert actions operations.

Option 2: Respond to document requests on a case-by-case basis.

Under this option, the materials accumulated by the Rockefeller Commission would presumably be provided immediately. The Special Group Augmented/Operation Mongoose papers would be requested by the Congressional Committees; we would respond to these requests on an item-by-item basis.

ADVANTAGES:

- o Gives us more time to develop a position.
- o No likelihood of accusation of "cover-up."

DISADVANTAGES:

- o As a practical matter, would require production of actual copies of documents to the Congress; publication or leaks of these documents -- however sanitized -- would compound the diplomatic and similar repercussions.

- o Item-by-item review and paraphrasing would be onerous internally, and would increase the danger of confrontations with the Congress over the pace and manner of production.
- o Prolongs the process and keeps the issue alive.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 4, 1975

Considerations both as to the Handling of the
Rockefeller Report and the
Proposed Presidential Speech are:

1. Ways to handle printed report of Rockefeller Commission.

a) Have Commission members appear with President
on Friday, June 6, when they can deliver "first" copy
of report to him and he can:

- (i) Commend them for their service;
- (ii) Announce when other copies will be
publicly released.

b) Have copies of the report available for the Press
at 8 AM Saturday under an embargo until Noon on
Saturday, which would allow evening TV news shows
on Saturday and Sunday newspapers to run the story.
(Rockefeller staff personnel suggest embargo for
Sunday papers.)

c) A Presidential statement on his views of the report
could be released when copies of the report are released,
and at the same time, to deal with the separate con-
fidential material on alleged assassination plots, the
President in his statement could announce:

- (i) His firm stand against ever using or
encouraging assassination as a tool of
U. S. policy.
- (ii) His view that imposing firm restraints
on future conduct is the responsibility of
this President and that in order to assure
adherence to the restraints, it is unnece-

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essary to fix blame on other Administrations for what may have happened in the past.

- (iii) His intention, however, to consult concerning the separate materials presented by the Commission with the Department of Justice and with the Select Committees of the Senate and House as to whether any further purpose would be served by additional investigations into past and long-since terminated plans to employ violence against foreign officials.

2. Possible early speech by the President:

- a) To announce steps he is taking to implement Commission recommendations.
- b) To explain the necessity for foreign intelligence operations and the need for safeguarding sources and methods from disclosure.
- c) To urge an early move by the Congress to cooperate with the Administration in passage of desirable legislation without waiting for exhaustive investigation and documentation of past activities.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 4, 1975

MEMORANDUM

FROM: RODERICK HILLS

SUBJECT: A Proposed Agenda for Presidential
Attention to Matters Affecting the
Intelligence Community

On Friday, June 6, at a Press Conference the President could formally receive the Rockefeller Commission Report, thank the Commission for its work, and announce his intention to release it publicly over the weekend. He could acknowledge the point made in the Report that matters concerning alleged assassination plans are incomplete and state that he will cause a complete briefing of matters affecting the Intelligence Community, including all information concerning the alleged assassination plans, be made to appropriate Congressional leaders at an early date. He should then reiterate his position that even contingent planning for the assassination of foreign leaders is repugnant to our system of government and state his satisfaction with the fact that this same conclusion had been reached by the Intelligence Community which had voluntarily taken some steps to correct such action.

He could conclude by announcing his intention to give a full statement to the American public on his views on all matters affecting the activities of the Intelligence Community following his study of all information in his possession and following his briefing of Congressional leaders.

The President's briefing of Congress could include the following features:



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(1) The meeting to be held no later than June 16 at the White House might be limited to the Joint Leadership and the Chairman and Ranking Minority members of the Senate and House Select Committees.

(2) A paper should be presented at the meeting representing the President's views on the Rockefeller Commission Report, alleged assassination plans, the pending Congressional inquiries, and national security matters.

(3) All matters gathered by the Rockefeller Commission, including alleged assassination plans, plus an assortment of materials gathered by the Counsel's office on the assassination plans, could at that time be made available to the Senate Select Committee staff under the same procedures we have used in the past.

(4) The President could announce his intention to speak to the country on the same matters (i. e., (2) above).

In his briefing paper to Congressional leaders and in his following public statement the President may wish to make these points:

1. The prolonged and redundant investigations of the Intelligence Community must be concluded efficiently or the public benefit admittedly gained from the effort will be far outweighed by -

(a) the increased danger that major secrets will be exposed;

(b) the inability of the various agencies to continue and begin their necessary and proper intelligence gathering activities under the pervasive scrutiny of the investigations now in progress.

2. The investigation can be completed properly and quickly if the following procedure is followed.



(a) The Senate should now list the important alleged abuses for which they believe more information is needed and the staff has indicated that that list will be provided.

(b) Upon receipt, the Intelligence Community will be directed to brief the Committee as a whole as to each matter and the Select Committee staff can decide whether any further evidence is necessary.

(c) The House Select Committee can begin by reviewing the work of the Rockefeller Commission and determine whether the Senate Select Committee is apparently doing a full job. Following the Senate Committee's report the House should:

(i) Ascertain whether the two investigations are sufficient.

(ii) Investigate any matters it believes have been ignored.

(iii) Ascertain whether the steps the President will be taking are sufficient.

(iv) Introduce legislation if it deems such to be necessary.

(d) By this careful procedure all interviewing of witnesses and all requests for documents should be substantially completed before

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3. The President can announce at least in general the action he has or will take.

4. The President can reassert his strong recommendations made in his joint Congressional speech as to the value of the country's intelligence agencies.

5. The concluding and strongest comments could center on the increasing tendency of the country's press to willingly publish secrets. A broad reference to recent stories in several papers could be the basis for (a) strong condemnation, (b) promise of prosecution for future acts, and (c) the announced decision to seek stronger laws to protect against such stories.