NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
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WITHDRAWAL ID 017752

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . National security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . Memorandum of Conversation

TITLE . . . . Ford; John McCone, Former DCI

CREATION DATE 11/11/1974

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                                (Former DCI)

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~/SENSITIVE

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:
The President
John McCone, former Director of
  Central Intelligence
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy
  Assistant to the President for
  National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:
Monday, November 11, 1974
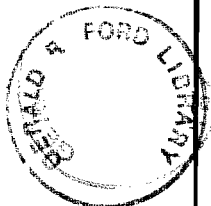1:30 p.m.

PLACE:
The Oval Office
The White House

[After initial pleasantries and small talk, the conversation turned to the problems of the intelligence community.]

Mr. McCone: I wanted to talk about the CIA and the fact that its image is being tarnished, both here and in Europe. People talk to me in a way far different from the way they did a few years ago. I am deeply concerned that it may be more than Colby. Nothing I say should be construed as criticism of Colby and the Agency. I had my eye on him for years and he is very able.

But I fear two things: The loss of image lowers morale and people leave the Agency, and second, the Agency is no longer the most attractive to college graduates. There are some things which can be done. [He hands the President a paper.]

The role and mission of the Agency and the intelligence community must be redefined and reaffirmed. This means:

-- The authority of the Director over the intelligence community must be reaffirmed. President Kennedy did that for me.

-- The question of Agency personnel abroad: There is an attitude of why should CIA have anybody abroad. They are there mostly to help the host country. ⬚

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~~TOP SECRET~~ — XGDS (3)
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-- The use of covert political activity: It is much less now than it used to be, as you know. There must be an understanding on the Hill that we must keep this in reserve as long as the KGB does it.

The President: Most of them on the Hill do, but you get these zealots, together with some of the press, who just don't give a damn.

Mr. McCone: I met with Senator Church before the hearings and he understands, but then he shot barbed questions at me. I would hope you would meet with the Senate leaderhip and resolve the dispute between the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Armed Services. The House is much better organized. When Dick Russell was there I got him to invite Fulbright. He didn't want to.

The Harrington matter arose because of the House rule. If you could bring about a situation where surveillance by these committees would constitute surveillance by the House . . . .

The President: We had a leadership meeting recently where we went into this, and I think we have it pretty well taken care of.

Mr. McCone: I think at a breakfast you could also reaffirm the roles and missions. He [Colby] should also have access to you. I had access to President Kennedy. President Johnson was different. Allen Dulles had constant contact with Ike.

The President: I meet daily with [   ] I met with Colby three times before SALT, and we also had a meeting on the 40 Committee. I was surprised at how little we spend on covert activities.

Mr. McCone: I suspected it myself and I reduced it from the Dulles days.

The President: What is your thought on whether DIA is a good organization? Has it been effective?

Mr. McCone: Yes. It is an instrument of the JCS, and to that extent it is parochial, but it does a good job. It has a lot of civilians, under Civil Service. It is a good idea, but I insisted that the Service intelligence chiefs still sit on the USIB.

Another subject is PFIAB. I would look at that -- it needs revitalization, including the chairman and staff. It should be revitalized and it should have higher visibility. Then if it is shuffled, it could meet with the select committees.

The President: I met with them a couple of times when I was Vice President. There are some good people on the board.

Mr. McCone: Admiral Anderson is a good friend of mine but he is not an intelligence officer.

The President: Didn't Johnson put General J.C. Meyer on it?

Mr. McCone: There used to be a man by the name of Coyne who ran the staff. He knew the bureaucracy and he knew his way around. Giving this Board visibility and authority would help defuse some of the criticism that CIA is running wild. [Looking over a list of Board membership:] Land, Cherne, Baker, Gray are all good. Shultz is good. Teller is a fine guy but emotional.

The Board needs visibility.

The President: Brent, I want to meet with the PFIAB next time. Also I will meet with the leadership after the first of the year to discuss the handling of briefings and CIA oversight.

Mr. McCone: There is legislation on the Hill for criminal penalties for people like Agee.

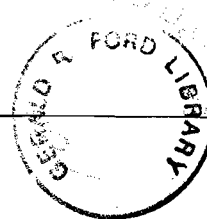The President: Make a note of that, Brent.

Mr. McCone: What you need to show is that the Agency is not a free-wheeling unsupervised agency.

The President: Could I change the subject for just a minute? You have wide acquaintance around. Would you send me any names of people you think would fit in at the top or anywhere? That I would appreciate.

Mr. McCone: I will be glad to. I gave some to Bill Scranton. I will send you a list.

The President: I don't anticipate any major changes. I don't want any change on Kissinger's or for the moment Schlesinger.

[There was a brief discussion of energy, reorganization, and the conversation ended.]

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