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12 December 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR MESSRS. ROOSEVELT

[OFFICE]

SUBJECT: Project BCFIEND.

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

1. Llewellyn Thompson called me today and stated that he and the other persons in the Department of State who had wanted to consider our memorandum revising the character, scope and pace of the BCFIEND project had completed their review of this memorandum and that we might consider the paper as approved. I asked whether this meant that the paper was in all respects satisfactory to the Department and particularly whether he, Mr. Perkins and Mr. Rusk had any comment or suggestion to make. Mr. Thompson replied that the only important comment or suggestion was the one which he had made at the time of our presentation of the paper at the meeting in his office with the British present, viz., that if it should be deemed by us to be necessary or desirable to approach [] ,

[] or [] --this should be done at the technical level (OPC direct to our opposite numbers) and not through diplomatic channels; and that it should be done on the basis of representing the activity as a souped-up intelligence or information gathering activity as distinguished from a project designed and intended to accomplish the overthrow of the regime.

2. I understand from Mr. Joyce with whom I checked after receiving this "flash" from Mr. Thompson that he is sending to us a brief memorandum which is generally to this same effect and which we may regard as our formal authorization to proceed.

3. In the light of this development, I am all the more anxious to know what General Magruder's reaction may be to this piece and I should like to receive a report from Mr. Roosevelt about his conversation with General Magruder (and possibly with Lt. Col. Dickey to whom I believe we also intended to speak about this matter).

4. Having received some sort of sign from the Department of Defense, I believe that it would be in order for us to send a cable to [] [] advising that the State Department has approved the paper as a basis for our further action under this project, subject to the stated qualifications, and that he should pass on this information and at the same time make inquiry to determine the status of the matter with the Foreign Office. Having dispatched the cable to Ruddock, you might also speak to [] [] who will no doubt be very prompt in getting off a message to their superiors (hence the reason for the timing).

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5. Incidentally when I raised with Mr. Thompson the question of whether it would now be in order for us to notify the British of the State Department approval, he said that he would have no objection to this but he wondered whether it might not be well for us to wait to hear what the Foreign Office has to say before advising the British of this State Department approval. He was not at all insistent about this and specifically told me that we could notify the British whenever we wanted to--but he said that he thought if we waited for the British to speak first, we might find out a bit more of what is really on the mind of the Foreign Office than would otherwise be the case. While I agree with Mr. Thompson's last stated thought, I feel that there is another angle to this matter, namely that we already know that the Foreign Office is growing a bit balky about the entire project; and may need the stimulus which this news of the State Department approval would provide in order not to arrive at a decision unfavorable to the continuation of the project on its revised basis. I should appreciate receiving your views.

F.G.W.

FGW:lgw

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