

24 June 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Mr. John Finney, New York Times

1. During the Director's appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 23 June, I was cornered in the hall by John Finney. I had known him casually when we were neighbors in Alexandria some years ago and have run into him socially once or twice since.

2. Finney asked if a DCI had ever appeared before a congressional committee with a member of the cabinet. I said not to my knowledge. He asked if this wasn't a bad thing. I said I couldn't see why it would be from our standpoint--I was sure the Director would say the same thing regardless of who else was there--that the one thing he has drilled into all of us is that we have got to stick to the facts as we see them regardless of whether they are popular or politically opportune. I said I thought this would be understood by all concerned, Executive and Legislative alike, since the people in responsible positions must realize that we would be entirely useless to them and everyone else if we did otherwise. I recalled that the reason we were set up in the first place was to provide an independent voice in the intelligence field--this was our whole raison d'etre. Finney said this was good to know. He said "Helms is doing a good job isn't he?" I said certainly from the standpoint of those of us working for him--he was a real pro in the business and he had a very precise concept of our mission--serve our customers by getting the facts, reporting them candidly, analyzing them objectively and staying strictly out of policy.

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