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STATINTL

White House Blocks Prestige Report Release

President Upholds Decision by Herter And Allen in Survey, Hagerty Says

The White House balked today at making public a report which Democrats contend shows United States prestige abroad has declined.

Press Secretary James C. Hagerty read newsmen a statement saying that Secretary of State Herter and Director George Allen of the United States Information

Agency "have determined that this paper will not be made available outside the Executive Branch."

Making clear the White House backed up that stand, the statement said Mr. Herter and Allen had acted under policies approved by the President.

The report is understood to be one from USIA employees in the field, but its exact nature has never been officially disclosed.

Fulbright Plans Quiz

Shortly before Mr. Hagerty's statement, Chairman Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee predicted the committee will want to look after the election at what he called political activity by the State Department during the election campaign.

Senator Fulbright, who has been turned down by the State Department on requests for the USIA document as well as for the full text of the talks between Vice President Nixon and Premier Khrushchev in Russia in 1959, said he thought

the Foreign Relations Committee would want to inquire into this subject this winter regardless of how the election goes.

Senator Kennedy, the Democratic presidential nominee, has been on the campaign circuit contending the USIA survey supports his position that American prestige in the world has slipped. He has demanded that the document be made public.

Tagged "Secret"

Vice President Nixon has said he has no objection.

But Mr. Hagerty said the document "is classified secret."

"What you are asking me about," he told reporters, as he read from words scribbled on a note pad, "is entitled an internal, low level staff paper similar to many others that are periodically prepared by staff elements within the United States Information Agency for staff use. It is classified secret. Under policies approved by the President pertaining to internal

working papers of the executive branch of the Government, the Secretary of State and the director of the United States Information Agency have determined that this paper will not be made available outside the executive branch."

White House Decision

Mr. Hagerty had been told that Thomas Broderick, a USIA counsel, told Congress yesterday that Mr. Allen was going to check with the White House for a decision on whether or not to withhold the report.

Mr. Hagerty was asked whether Mr. Allen had checked with the White House and what the decision was. The press secretary's short statement was the answer.

Representative Moss, Democrat of California, chairman of the House Government Operations Subcommittee, last night quoted Mr. Broderick as saying

Mr. Allen was checking the

Mr. Moss and Senator Fulbright have both been seeking access to the report.

Mr. Hagerty had said that just so there would be no misunderstanding about President Eisenhower's position on prestige, he wanted to refer newsmen to many public statements on that subject, including Eisenhower's address Thursday night at San Francisco.

Slap at Kennedy

In what was widely interpreted as a slap at Senator Kennedy, Mr. Eisenhower said in his speech that no one should be misled by those he said seem fond of "deprecating the standing, condition and performance of the entire Nation."

"Surely," the President said then, "we must avoid smugness and complacency. But in the face of a bright record of progress and development, we hear some misguided people wail that the United States is stumbling into the status of a second-class power and that our prestige has slumped to an all-time low, we are simply listening to debasement of the truth."

Mr. Hagerty told newsmen that "this is the President speaking from his knowledge of all of the facts and not just from a position paper prepared by one agency."

Yesterday, Mr. Hagerty had brushed aside all inquiries as to the existence of a report or reports.

Senator Fulbright said it is "disgraceful" for the State Department "to leak or not leak information as it sees fit."

Rebuffed on Text

He was referring to the department's refusal to give him the full text of the Nixon-Khrushchev letter. The Senator has charged that portions of the talks favorable to the Vice President were used in a series of newspaper articles by Earl Mazo, who wrote a biography of Mr. Nixon.

Senator Fulbright said USIA Director Allen told him last week that he was under instructions not to disclose the prestige reports. When the Senator asked him if the order came from the White House, he assured the Senator there had been complete liaison with the White House on the question.

Mr. Moss said Mr. Allen himself had refused to discuss the matter with subcommittee investigators after Mr. Roderick had advised Mr. Allen to claim executive privilege. That is the claimed right of the executive

advice prepared for presidential guidance.

Senator Gore, Democrat of Tennessee, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, added a request of his own yesterday and challenged Mr. Nixon to use his influence to obtain release of the reports.

"This appears to be a case of secrecy in Government at its most objectionable - for