

Outside the System

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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ACTION

May 27, 1975

OBE

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: LES JANKA *for*

SUBJECT: Public Affairs Handling of Rockefeller  
Commission Report on CIA

Much of the press has already come to the conclusion that the Rockefeller Commission on the CIA will produce a "white wash." While some expect the Church Committee effort to result in a "witch hunt," few doubt that its findings will suggest a thorough and possibly shattering restructuring of the CIA's charter and organization. What the Murphy Commission will produce in terms of hard recommendations remains to be seen.

Many sources are already saying the Rockefeller report will give the CIA essentially a clean bill of health, noting only a few "aberrations" with some suggestions for preventing such mishaps in the future.

It appears to me imperative that the President be prepared to move vigorously on the recommendations of the Rockefeller Commission. Such action would vitiate charges of "white wash" and perhaps preempt some of the "witch hunt" tendencies of the Church Committee.

To protect the vital role of the CIA and preserve public confidence in the control of intelligence operations within the framework of our democracy, the President should be prepared to take actions going even beyond the recommendations of the Rockefeller Commission, saying in effect, "even if the original charges against the CIA proved to be only minor 'aberrations,' the role of intelligence is so vital to our national security that I am taking a series of actions to ensure that such questions will never arise again."

NSS Review Completed.

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2

We cannot tolerate a situation where the White House simply "studies" the recommendations of the Rockefeller Commission, lets charges of "white wash" build even further, and gives by default a mandate to Senator Church to come up with a "final solution" to the CIA problem.

To address in advance these important questions, I recommend that a small, select task force be formed with White House and Rockefeller Commission staff members to address on an urgent basis the White House response to the Rockefeller report, developing in advance of the Report's release a rapid and thorough response keyed to the important public affairs considerations raised above.

Although the CIA problem first arose as a problem of media exposure, a simple media campaign is not being suggested here as an effective response. A visible program of vigorous action to restore public confidence in the Executive Branch's ability to correct itself is required. A few illustrative steps which might be considered are:

-- A Bipartisan Leadership meeting within a few days of the Report's release where the President would outline his plans for responding to the Commission's recommendations.

-- A public statement or message by the President announcing the specific steps he plans in response to the Report's recommendations.

-- A public announcement providing an early answer to the pending question of how much the Rockefeller Commission material will be given to Senator Church's committee.

-- Public release of as much material as possible supporting the findings of the Rockefeller Commission.

-- An announcement naming an entire new Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and giving it a reinvigorated charter.

-- Designation of the Attorney General as a member of the Forty Committee, with the publicly stated objective of ensuring that no domestic laws are broken in the conduct of covert activities.

These are only a few suggestions. The President's response must be rapid and significant if that response is to be perceived by the public as taking seriously its concerns for an effective, efficient, and tightly

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3

controlled intelligence apparatus, equal to the international challenges our nation faces but at the same time consistent with the values and principles of the democracy it is to protect.

RECOMMENDATION

That you discuss with Secretary Kissinger and Don Rumsfeld the need for a special White House task force to address and plan for a public response to the release of the Rockefeller Commission report.

\_\_\_\_\_ Approve

\_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove

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