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DDI-131-64

7 January 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Talk with Joseph Alsop, 5 Jan 64

1. On Sunday, 5 January, at his invitation, I joined Joe Alsop for a long walk along the Georgetown Canal for a talk about the "State of the Union." As usual, the conversation was rather general and philosophic, having to do with the general state of the Communist world and, more particularly (on Alsop's part), on the state of the Johnson Administration.

2. I used the opportunity to give Alsop an informal fill-in on the main economic points about the Soviet Union which we have been briefing newspapermen, generally, on. I also touched on my concern lest awareness of the relatively favorable U.S./U.S.S.R. balance of forces impart an exaggerated "peace" euphoria among the Western nations.

3. For once, Alsop seemed a little more cheerful than I, saying that he was not very worried about slackening of Western defenses through excessive interest in expanding trade and credit relationships with the U.S.S.R., although he recognized it as a danger.

4. Joe is wrapped up in domestic politics and really showed surprisingly little interest in the foreign scene. I think he is trying to complete his emotional readjustment to the transition from the Kennedy Administration and is anxious to be able to approve of the new President. He told me that he had just learned at first hand that the "Irish Mafia" had all signed up as enthusiastic Johnson supporters and would fight the campaign with him. This, Alsop took to be a sign of strength and a hopeful augury for the future. As usual, I refrained from saying much about these Washington matters and, also as usual, found that Joe was perfectly happy to do practically all the talking in our "exchange of views."

5. The only other topic discussed was the "image" of CIA. I mentioned a few recent outrageous attacks on the Agency and complained, as I had in the past, that journalists seem only to be interested in writing scandal about us rather than anything on our solid accomplishments. Joe said that he thought

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that we were way too "sensitive" about criticism against us, saying that he thought most of it was an inevitable journalistic game, and we should not worry a great deal about it.

Ray S. Cline

RAY S. CLINE
Deputy Director (Intelligence)

cc: DCI (via DDCI & ExDir)
Assistant to DCI (Mr. Chretien)

RSC:jr

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