



General  
Services  
Administration

Information Security  
Oversight  
Office

Washington, DC 20405

April 3, 1985

Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Vice Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of March 14, 1985, concerning the Frank Church papers at Boise State University. While I am concerned that your letter suggests some misunderstanding of our intentions, I believe that a continuing dialogue between executive branch officials and the Select Committee on Intelligence on this and other issues will aid in resolving them.

As the Select Committee is aware, the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO) is an unusual executive branch entity. Specifically established by the President to oversee the classification, declassification, and safeguarding of national security information, ISOO is an administrative component of the General Services Administration but receives its policy and program direction from the National Security Council. ISOO performs its function with a great deal of autonomy, representing no special interest other than the President's concern about the credibility of the information security system itself. Many diverse interests, including the Select Committee, have complimented ISOO on its effectiveness and objectivity.

One of ISOO's primary functions is to receive and act upon complaints, suggestions, and concerns about the administration of the information security program from persons within or outside the executive branch. On a number of occasions ISOO has acted to resolve the problems that occur when classified information finds its way into collections of private papers. Therefore, I don't need to defend ISOO's interest in the Church papers at Boise State. ISOO had recognized a potential problem area even before officials at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) contacted me to express their concern. The available information, including the existing finding aids and Boise State's own press release, led to the reasonable conclusion that the collection might contain classified national security information. It was also very clear to ISOO that the University was not fully aware of the problems that the existence of classified information within the collection would present or the steps that would be necessary to safeguard it.

With these legitimate interests in mind, I communicated with officials at the University, and then the Senate Historian and Legal Counsel. Subsequently, officials of the CIA, including its Director, William J. Casey, communicated with the Select Committee. In every instance we have sought to explore available

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alternatives in a fully cooperative posture. For example, in my letter to the University Librarian, I specifically sought his input about available initiatives to resolve the question of whether the collection contained classified information and, if so, how to go about protecting it. In Mr. Casey's letter of November 21, 1984, to the then Chairman of the Select Committee, he concluded: "I would appreciate any assistance that you and your staff might render in determining whether classified intelligence information is in fact in the collection and, if so, how best to deal with the issue."

I very much regret, therefore, that first the University and now the Select Committee appear to have overreacted to our concerns. Our intentions have never extended in any manner whatsoever to a confrontation over the ownership and custodianship of the Church papers or to a debate on separation of powers issues. I simply am concerned that reasonable efforts be undertaken to assure that the collection does not include national security information, or, alternatively, that classified information within the collection be appropriately safeguarded.

To this end I again seek the Select Committee's assistance. I would be more than happy to meet at your convenience with you, other Members of the Select Committee, or its staff to discuss the question of the Church papers or any other matter related to the administration of the information security program.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Steven Garfinkel

STEVEN GARFINKEL  
Director