

6 March 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Dr. Tordella and [redacted] of NSA
Re Pueblo Matter

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1. On instructions from the Director, I called Dr. Tordella this afternoon to report highlights of the Director's appearance before the House Subcommittee on the Pueblo yesterday. [redacted] General Counsel of NSA, was also on the line.

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2. I told Dr. Tordella that:

a. Committee questions centered largely on the 303 procedures;

b. matters of interest to NSA were brought up by Frank Slatinshek who quoted General Carter as having said that the Pueblo loss might have cost us five or six years. The Director doubted that anyone could make this statement at this stage, particularly in view of the fact that none of us knew exactly what kind of equipment of this type the Soviets might have;

c. the Director said he was much more concerned about documents than technical equipment.

3. Dr. Tordella said he fully agreed with this.

4. I said Slatinshek went on to ask whether the capture of technical equipment didn't help the enemy in breaking our systems, and that in response the Director said:

a. The Committee had better hear from an expert on this subject;

b. however, it was true that the capture of a crypto equipment would be very damaging if the loss weren't known, but the loss is known and corrective action can be taken and the damage largely prevented;

c. the Director conceded that the Pueblo loss is serious but emphasized it is not possible to say how serious until present investigations are completed;

d. meanwhile, countermeasures have been taken on the assumption that everything on board the vessel may have been compromised.

5. Dr. Tordella indicated this was true.

6. I said that Representative Nedzi then commented he was surprised and glad to hear the loss was not as great as feared, but maybe it would be a good thing to let the enemy think that they had gotten our most sophisticated equipment. I said the Director agreed this might be a good thing.

7. I mentioned the Director's comment that we all get parochial in the intelligence business and that in fact the truly sensitive secrets are like the heart of an artichoke and that often a number of layers have to be peeled off before the real nuggets are exposed. I said the Director therefore suggested to the Subcommittee that in trying to assess the damage they take care to make sure everybody understands exactly what is being discussed.

8. I mentioned the Subcommittee's interest in contingency plans and suggested NSA witnesses might get questions in this regard.

9. Dr. Tordella asked if there was a written transcript of the hearings and if so whether he could see it since it would be helpful to know the exact context in which the above points were brought out. I said a transcript had been made and we expected to have a chance to review it for accuracy. However, I said this transcript was strictly the property of the Subcommittee and I wasn't sure about the propriety of showing it to our friends. I said I would mention the problem to the Director.

10. [redacted] broke in to say that, as Mr. Warner could verify, these transcripts have been shared between our agencies in the past.

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