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24 MAY 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Meeting with Dr. William M. Leary

1. At the request of Mr. Al Cox, I met with Dr. William M. Leary at the Air America office on 18 May 1972. Dr. Leary is a historian who has been very interested in CAT and is desirous of writing the history of aviation in the Far East which would involve CAT. Dr. Leary has been cleared for the purposes of discussion.

2. Approximately one year ago, there was a proposal that Dr. Leary write the overt history of the company and such a suggestion was apparently made to Dr. Leary. However, it was subsequently decided that we did not want Dr. Leary to write this history and he was advised of this decision by

3. In the meeting, Mr. Cox opened the discussion by stating that he had asked for the meeting in order that Dr. Leary would have some contact within the Agency. He also wanted to let me know that Dr. Leary was cleared, that he was very interested in the history of CAT, and that he still had an interest in pursuing this history.

4. Dr. Leary stated that he had done a great deal of research regarding aviation in the Far East, and through the Willauer papers and other documents in the public domain, he had compiled a history up to about 1950. He has written two articles, one of which has been published and one which is about to be published. Both of these articles have been checked by and generally condoned by this Agency. He is now interested in continuing this history from 1950 to 1959 and particularly he is interested in the 1951 to 1954 period and his interest is primarily in the non-sensitive activities of the company. He stated that he was not interested in any of the clandestine activities of CAT but was interested in the commercial activities and the overt government contracts carried out by the company.

5. I asked that Dr. Leary be a little more specific as to the items in which he would be interested. He stated that he is, of course, interested in the commercial passenger flying of the company, the build-up of the technical capability and the overt government contracts during the Korean War such as contract. He is also interested in contracts with foreign

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governments [REDACTED]

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If authorized to pursue this matter, he recognizes that he would undoubtedly come across items the Agency considers sensitive but agreed that he would delete any such items at our request.

6. Since a portion of this at least is a matter of public record, I asked where he needed our assistance. He stated that first of all he would need access to the company records here and overseas in order to document the history. Secondly, he felt that he would need to contact individuals formerly involved with CAT during this period and he gave [REDACTED] an example. He stated that most of these people would be very hesitant to talk to him about company operations at that time unless they had approval from the Agency to discuss these matters with him.

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7. Dr. Leary then discussed the problem of sources of information. He noted that many of those involved during that period are retired and a number of them are no longer living. He stated that it would be his hope that he could contact these sources of information while they are still available. He even suggested the possibility of taped interviews with these individuals which could be retained and controlled by the Agency if we desired.

8. I told Dr. Leary that even though there had been some publicity regarding Agency involvement with CAT and Air America, we still treated this matter as a matter of sensitivity and that we considered this association to be classified as of the present time. I also indicated that the most recent information I have was that the Agency was not particularly interested in pursuing a history of the company at this time but that I would review his proposal with appropriate Agency officials and advise him of our decision in this matter.

9. Dr. Leary expressed his appreciation for the discussion and stated that he was primarily interested in seeing that the history of this period was written and stated that if the Agency decided that we were not interested in having this matter pursued at this time, he hoped that the Agency would keep him in mind whenever this situation changed. He also indicated a willingness to compile this information and have it retained by the Agency until we authorized release.

10. Insofar as future contact is concerned, Dr. Leary furnished the following address:

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Dr. William M. Leary
Department of History
University of Victoria
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
Telephone: 604 479-1738

He advised that he would be travelling in the immediate future and would be at the University of Victoria during the 1972-1973 school year. For 1973 he has received an appointment with the University of Georgia at Athens, Georgia. He, of course, indicated a willingness to make himself available at any time in connection with this proposal. I furnished Dr. Leary with my home phone number and home address. I also furnished him my office telephone number for contact during office hours.

11. Dr. Leary appeared to be well disposed toward the Agency and appears to be an historian with a sincere interest in preserving aviation history in the Far East. He appears to be well qualified to pursue the history of CAT either independently or in cooperation with this Agency. I was very much impressed with Dr. Leary and feel that we might be well advised to authorize him to proceed with such a history. The problem in my mind is the timing of such an effort and with the war in Southeast Asia continuing I feel that this effort should be delayed until some later date.

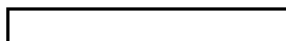
12. Unless advised to the contrary, I plan to recontact Dr. Leary and advise him that while we are not in a position to take positive steps toward the preparation of the CAT history at this time, we are not against such a concept in principle. I would propose to advise him that we would hope that we could keep in touch with him and at such time as we are interested in pursuing this history, we would contact him. Meanwhile, Dr. Leary does have a point of contact in the Agency and can feel free to contact us at any time.



Special Assistant to the
Deputy Director for Support

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cc: ✓ General Counsel



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