

61-8524

20 October 1964

Dear Mr. President:

I have noticed with some distress a statement in the current issue of TIME magazine that "... in 1963, when the CIA suggested field investigations on Johnson Aides Moyers, Valenti, Reedy and Jenkins, there was a long, hostile silence on the White House end of the phone. The CIA, lacking legal authority to require investigations of presidential staffers, had no alternative but to give the four men top clearance."

This statement is not consistent with the facts. Our records show that on 4 December, Mr. Bromley Smith called my Executive Assistant, Mr. Walter Elder, and requested the above clearances in anticipation of a NSC meeting on 5 December at which I was to make a briefing on a sensitive estimate. Mr. Elder referred the matter to me and I ordered the clearances issued. There was no suggestion on our part for a field investigation nor did the question of legal authority to require investigations arise. Neither was there any "long, hostile silence."

I assume full responsibility for the issuance of the clearances.

This afternoon Mr. John Steele, TIME Washington Bureau Chief, called me and I asked him the source of this statement. He stated that the statement came from "a high government source whom I consider knowledgeable." In answer to my question as to whether the source was in CIA, he responded that it was not. He refused to answer further questions.

I can throw no further light on the background of this article which I consider unfortunate but believe it more probably attributable to the imagination of the writer than to any other source.

Respectfully yours,

Signed
John A. McCone

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ER file L. B. Johnson
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The President
The White House

White House