

15 August 1974

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Mr. Robert L. Borosage



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Dear Mr. Borosage:

Thank you for your invitation to appear at your conference on the Central Intelligence Agency and Covert Actions. As you no doubt are aware from the press, we in CIA have attempted to be responsive to Congressional and public interest in our activities to the extent this is possible while fulfilling my statutory responsibilities to protect intelligence sources and methods. In this we are seeking to conform with our open Constitutional society and at the same time carry out the intelligence functions essential to protect it.

Thus I have accepted invitations to speak before a variety of groups seriously interested in understanding CIA and its functioning. In principle, therefore, I would accept your invitation and welcome the opportunity to present my views on this subject. As you note in your letter, however, I am somewhat impressed with the fact that "most" of the papers and subjects on your program are indeed critical of the Agency and its activities. I am surprised that there is no apparent attempt to examine the need for the contribution that objective and independent intelligence can make to policy-making. I also note that there is no discussion of the potential difficulties posed to our country and our open society by the closed societies with whom we share this world and whose intentions and capabilities vis-a-vis the United States can best be negotiated about or countered if they are known to our national leadership. I think, for example, of the contribution intelligence has made to peace in a variety of situations, from the Cuban missile crisis to the SALT agreements, matters in which I would think your Fund would be interested and would applaud.

MORI/CDF

Since the basic thrust of your conference seems to be aimed in a critical direction, however, which is certainly your privilege and right under our Constitution, I think the most useful contribution I could make would be to appear toward its end and respond to the questions and criticisms developed in the earlier panels. Thus, I would think my appearance might be better scheduled on the afternoon of September 13th. In that way, I would hope to present to our critics and to those interested in this subject matter my views and responses (and occasional acknowledgements) with respect to the criticisms raised in the course of your conference. I would hope that any such appearance could be conducted with the dignity and openness to conflicting ideas symbolized by its location in a hearing room of the United States Congress. I would certainly not expect to have the last word at the conference, but I think my contribution might be more useful if it were in the later stages.

If this approach seems appropriate to you, I would be happy to discuss any further details required.

Sincerely,

W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby
Director

cc: The Fund for Peace
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WEC:blp:jlp

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