

5 February 1973

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Joseph Alsop Account

1. Shortly after I took over my present duties (in September, 1966), Mr. Helms asked me to undertake the chore of dealing with Mr. Joseph Alsop on Indochinese matters. The object of this exercise was two-fold: first, to save Mr. Helms' time by minimizing the number of occasions Mr. Alsop called him directly on Indochinese questions and secondly (but more important), to endeavor to minimize any public sniping at the Agency's Indochina performance by Mr. Alsop by keeping him as charitably disposed toward us as was feasible, all factors considered.
2. In compliance with the above described instructions, I (and my wife) have developed, over the past six years, a cordial social relationship with Mr. (and Mrs.) Alsop. He calls me fairly frequently during periods when his interests are focused on Indochina and from time to time invites me for lunch. We have engaged in a number of general conversations about Indochinese matters, but I have taken great care never to let this arrangement be a source of leaks or a vehicle through which Mr. Alsop can acquire information he has no business having.
3. Mr. Alsop's own personality has actually made it fairly easy to keep him happy and reasonably well disposed without actually telling him anything. For one thing, he is fairly honorable (very much so for a journalist), and to date, has been very good about dropping any line of inquiry that I clearly did not wish to pursue. Also -- and even more useful -- it is quite easy to divert Mr. Alsop's attention and steer the conversation away from a thicket you do not care to enter by asking him a question on a different subject where he thinks (often with reason) he has considerable expertise. Such subjects are by no means limited to current international affairs. They include, for example, Greek history, archeology, renaissance painting, landscape gardening, and virtually all matters related to Chinese history, art, architecture, etc.

4. Over the past six years, Mr. Alsop has published a good deal of classified information, but he obtained none of it from us. He has good sources in the Pentagon (e.g., General Depuy, the DCSOPS, and General Graham in DIA). He is also actively cultivated, and used, by Dr. Kissinger (much more than Mr. Alsop realizes) and, at times, by the President himself.

5. I raise this matter because Mr. Alsop called me on Saturday (3 February), inviting me to lunch on Monday (5 February). I tentatively accepted the Monday engagement planning to cancel it Monday morning -- as I did -- pleading (legitimately) press of business which made it impossible for me to get away from my desk. I will endeavor to stall Mr. Alsop off until I know your pleasure on whether you want this relationship terminated or sustained under previous -- or different -- ground rules. On balance, I think the relationship has been useful to the Agency in the sense that it has helped to prevent our getting very much public static on Indochina matters from this quarter and seems to have been at least partially responsible for keeping Mr. Alsop charitably disposed toward us in general. If this relationship should be abruptly terminated or obviously curtailed, Joe's antennae are well enough tuned so that he would be almost certain to sense that something was up. Nonetheless, whether or not this relationship should continue as before is obviously a matter for your decision.

*G. A. C. Jr.*

George A. Carver, Jr.

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs