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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

22 MAR 1975

The Honorable Nelson A. Rockefeller
Chairman, Commission on CIA Activities
Within the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Vice President:

In my last appearance before the Commission, you asked me whether or not CIA had lost any effectiveness as a result of directives I issued in 1973 and 1974 with respect to Agency activities.

I attach at Tab A a paper that summarizes a response to this question from the individual directorates within the Agency. The net judgment is that the directives have had only limited impact on the operational capabilities of the Agency. However, I do not want to convey an overly optimistic impression in sending you this assessment. The continuing public disclosures and clamor concerning intelligence matters are having an effect on the willingness of many of our agents and other collaborators to run risks. Attached at Tab B are some details that show this.

As I responded to you when you asked me about our effectiveness, it is my own judgment that the 1973-74 directives were issued in the best interests of the Agency and our Government. That assertion, however, must stand the test of outside review and we will welcome the Commission's judgment on this important question.

Respectfully,

W. E. Colby

W. E. Colby
Director

Attachments a/s

cc: Mr. David W. Belin
Commission on CIA Activities
Within the United States

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(b)(3)

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Impact of the 29 August 1973 and 5 June 1974 Instructions on
CIA Operations

1. The instructions that were issued to the CIA directorates on 29 August 1973 and 5 June 1974, covering the wide range of questioned activities now subject to inquiry, appear to have had little effect on the operational capability of CIA. While there may be some modification of this judgment over a longer period of time, at present the negative aspects of the restrictions imposed by the instructions appear to be limited. A summary by directorates is below:

Directorate of Operations

In general the Agency's basic capability to conduct foreign intelligence operations has not been impaired, either abroad or within the U.S. A limited number of activities are affected, the most significant of which are noted below:

[Redacted]

(b)(1)
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(b) The restriction on categories of files on U.S. citizens is expected to make more difficult CIA access to potential agents or collaborators; this should not, however, affect substantially the Agency's counter-intelligence mission.

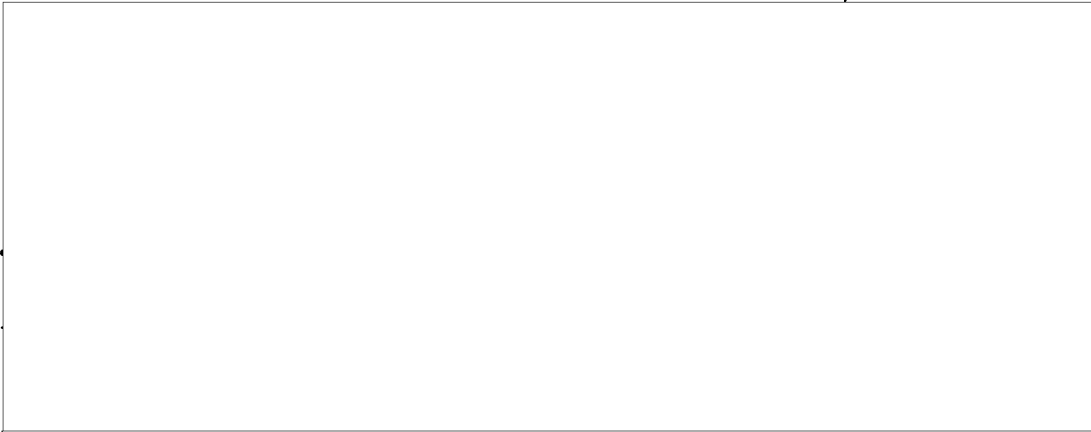
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[Redacted]

(b)(3)



(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(e) Careful scrutiny now required for the content of communications intercept programs abroad, to ensure that they exclude coverage of U.S. citizens or U.S. companies, sometimes results in elimination of relevant information on foreign targets for which the operations were intended. Processing problems arising from definitional questions (e.g., a "U. S. firm" as distinguished from a foreign subsidiary) renders the processing of intercepted intelligence more time consuming and inefficient.

Directorate of Intelligence

There has been no unfavorable impact on the execution of the responsibilities of this directorate as a result of the instructions.

Directorate of Administration

To date there have been no instances in which the instructions have interfered with the directorate's meeting its responsibilities and the requirements levied on it.

There is concern that there may be some erosion in the support received in the past from various law enforcement agencies and police departments within the U.S., resulting from decreased responsiveness on the part of CIA to their requests, e.g., name tracing, training, loan of specialized equipment, etc. It remains to be seen to what extent restrictions may inhibit CIA's timely follow-up in situations in which the protection of intelligence sources and methods is at stake.

While not directly attributable to the subject instructions, the current expose of police CIA relationships has severely jeopardized a very effective Office of Security

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

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Directorate of Science and Technology

This directorate has found that with one exception the instructions have not hindered the effectiveness of its operations. In fact, the existence of the instructions in explicit form has simplified the making of clear decisions in some instances, providing a basis for declining to provide requested support to other agencies or components in situations where it otherwise would be difficult to do so.

The single exception to date, in which there has been an adverse effect from the instructions, involves information formerly obtained on mail characteristics from the mail intercept program.



(b)(1)
(b)(3)

2. At present the most troublesome consideration is not the inhibiting effect of the subject instructions, but the impact on foreign intelligence operations of public disclosures of sensitive operational information, which is expected to increase over the next year. Foreign intelligence and security services, with which CIA conducts significant overseas activity in both foreign intelligence and counterintelligence work, may be expected to assume a reserved position towards an intelligence organization that cannot protect its own proper secrets, or theirs. Foreign agents, and prospective agents, may undergo a new level of reservation and resistance to collaboration with the U.S. intelligence organization. American citizens, who have cooperated with CIA in the past for patriotic reasons, may find critical publicity and the risk of exposure something that they do not wish to undergo. Such developments seriously will impair U.S. foreign intelligence operations for an extended period.