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OLC 74-1372

24 June 1974

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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SUBJECT: Meeting with Senator Stuart Symington on the Colson Story and the Senator Howard Baker Report

1. Following up on a telephone call to the Director from Senator Symington this morning, [redacted] and I met with the Senator in his office this afternoon for the purpose of discussing the Charles Colson stories that appeared in this morning's Washington Post and also in this afternoon's Star-News. Senator Symington immediately confronted us with the Star article but then said that Senator Baker was quite upset with the Agency and felt that we were impeding the work of the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities in not responding to his requests. We pointed out to Senator Symington rather clearly that we had cooperated with Senator Baker to the fullest extent having made 24 Agency witnesses available to him, none the least of which was former Director Richard Helms as the Senator well remembered.

2. We reviewed the chronology of the submission of Senator Baker's report to us for sanitization and our subsequent submission of our recommendations for sanitization and comments to the Chairmen of our Subcommittees in keeping with our normal practice. The Senator said he didn't "give a damn" about normal practice, but wondered why we hadn't made the material available to Senator Baker. We tried to explain to the Senator that we had, in fact, followed Senator Baker's lead in that he had submitted his report initially to Senators Stennis and McClellan, stating that he thought further inquiry was a matter within the jurisdiction of the CIA oversight Subcommittees. Despite this, Senator Baker went back to the Watergate Committee and obtained authorization from that Committee to request the Agency to sanitize the report and all the documents and testimony of the Agency witnesses. At that point Senators Stennis and McClellan returned to Baker the copies of

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the report previously given them and washed their hands of the matter. From that time to the present the matter has been at a standstill. We said the Director now feels he has no choice but to provide the Watergate Committee with our recommendations for sanitization of the report and our comments thereon but he is clearing a letter to Senator Ervin to this effect with Senators Stennis and McClellan. I left a copy of this letter with Senator Symington.

3. Getting back to the Colson story, we pointed out there was really nothing new in this story insofar as the Agency was concerned and said much of this material had been gone into by Senator Symington himself in the course of Mr. Colby's confirmation hearings. We pointed out several such instances in a copy of the hearings which we had with us and [redacted] subsequently identified other passages on this subject for Kathy Nelson, of Senator Symington's staff.

4. In very strong terms, Senator Symington said he felt the Director should issue a statement to the effect there is no substance whatsoever in the purported charges of any "spy" effort to compromise the President and the record so demonstrates. He said he felt the Director should also see the President himself (or attempt to reach him) and ask him if there is anything to this. He added he would probably not get through to the President but at least he could say he has asked to see the President about it. (Symington said he too is going to ask President Nixon about these allegations, i. e., the consideration of firing Mr. Colby.)

5. The Senator went on to say he will be appearing on Issues and Answers this weekend and wanted to be sure we keep him informed of developments since he does not want to be mousetrapped on this issue. We promised to do this. The Senator said he also has a call into Secretary Schlesinger and said he was going to ask him what he knew about the Colson story.

6. In capping off the meeting, the Senator said Mr. Colby should mind the store and not give speeches or appear before economic clubs, the press, etc. --all of which is politics. He said Helms stayed out of politics

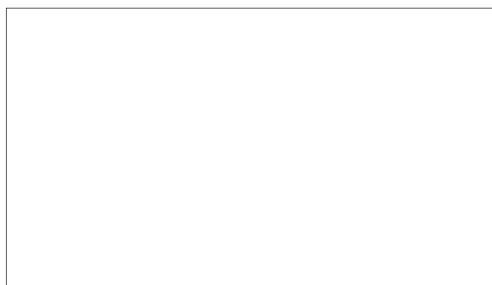
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and Colby should do the same, "that was how Helms was successful." We told the Senator we felt the Director was being more "public" largely to take the heat off of people like himself and other Senators who were hit very hard on the issue of secrecy surrounding the Agency during the Director's confirmation hearing and the subsequent floor debate during his nomination. Senator Symington shrugged this off by say not to worry about this--"we beat them down, didn't we?"



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