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CITE DIRECTOR

TO: IMMEDIATE TEHRAN.

TO AMBASSADOR HELMW FROM MR COLBY

1. DAN RATHER OF CBS ON 29 JANUARY CALLED ME WITH STORY HE HAD PICKED UP THAT SENATOR BAKER HAD ASKED CIA FOR ANY TAPES RELATING TO WATERGATE AND THAT WE HAD ASCERTAINED THAT ALL HAD BEEN DESTROYED, INCLUDING POSSIBLY DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT NIXON. I POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT WE STILL HOLD CUSHMAN/HUNT 22 JULY 1971 TAPE AND ARE MAKING THIS AVAILABLE PER THE SENATOR'S REQUEST. HOWEVER, WE HAVE NO OTHER TAPES ON THIS SUBJECT, AS OVER YEARS WE HAVE PERIODICALLY DESTROYED SUCH TAPES. IN FOLLOW-UP CLARIFICATIONS TO OTHER JOURNALS AND TO HOUSE COMMITTEE AND TO SENATMN BAKER, I SAID THAT WE HAD HAD CAPABILITY OF TAPING CONVERSATIONS IN OFFICES AND INCOMING PHONE CALLS. OFFICE TAPES WERE HANLLED BY OFFICE OF SECURITY, INCOMING PHONE CALLS BY SENIOR OFFICER'S SECRETARY. TRANSCRIPTS HAD BEEN PREPARED WHERE NEEDED. CUSTOM WITH RESPECT TO PHONE CALLS WAS THAT TAPE WOULD BE ERASED SHORTLY THEREAFTER AND TRANSCRIPT TORN UP. CUSTOM WITH RESPECT TO ROOM TAPES WAS THAT

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OFFICE OF SECURITY ON OCCASIONAL BASIS WOULD REQUEST PERMISSION TO DESTROY TAPES WHEN STORAGE FACILITIES BULGED. OUR RECORDS SHOWED THAT TAPE DESTRUCTION TOOK PLACE ^{IN} APPROXIMATELY 1963, JANU^{RY} 1971 AND "JANUARY 1973." WE KNOW THAT YOU DIRECTED

DESTRUCTION ALL TAPES AND TRANSCRIPTS PRIOR YOUR DEPARTURE. I ADDED THAT ~~WAS~~ ^{THERE} NO SELECTIVE OR CONSCIOUS DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE BUT RATHER NORMAL DISPOSITION ^{TION} OF OLD FILES NO

LONGER NEEDED. TO NEDZI AND BAKER I ADDED YOUR EMPHASIS ON CLOSE-HOLD~~OF~~ FACT OF SUCH TAPING (DESPITE FACT IT TECHNICALLY LEGAL SINCE ONE PARTY AWARE THEREOF).

2. COMPLICATION HAS NOW ARISEN IN FORM OF SENATOR MANSFIELD'S LETTER TO YOU AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS REQUESTING THAT NO MATERIAL RELATING TO WATERGATE, ETC., BE DESTROYED. MANSFIELD^{LELD} LETTER WAS DATED 16 JANUARY 1973, ^{YOU} ~~INITIALED~~ 17 JANUARY (AND RECEIPT GIVEN SENATOR MANSFIELD'S OFFICE 17 JANUARY). WALTERS AND I INITIALED 18 JANUARY, AND I SENT THE LETTER TO DDP AND THE OFFICE OF SECURITY. DDP NOTED RECEIPT 19 JANUARY, AND OFFICE OF SECURITY 22 JANUARY.

3. CALENDARS OF TECHNICIANS WHO DESTROYED TAPES BEAR NOTATION 24 JANUARY: "START DESTRUCTION OF TAPES PER INSTRUCTIONS

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ELIZ." UNDERSTAND THIS JOB WOULD TAKE FOUR TO FIVE DAYS.

4. ABOVE RAISES QUESTIONS WHICH ONLY YOU AND ELIZABETH CAN ANSWER. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS, WHICH OBVIOUSLY WOULD HAVE TO BE PASSED TO CONGRESS AND PROBABLY ALSO TO PRESS. ALTERNATIVELY, I CAN MERELY REFER THEM TO YOU ^{AND} ELIZABETH.

5. REGARDS (AND REGRETS), E2 IMPDET,

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

28 January 1974

The Honorable Richard Helms
The American Ambassador
Tehran, Iran

Dear Dick:

In trying to run down every possible involvement of ourselves with Watergate and Hunt, we found indications of the existence of twelve to fourteen sealed envelopes passed by Hunt to Jessup, Ferguson or Ratliff during the period August-November 1971. We have attempted to trace these memoranda in-house without a great deal of success. Certainly two were from Hunt to Malloy, two may have been from Liddy via Hunt to the same addressee, all providing supporting data for the Ellsberg psychological assessment. One probably was a request for a name trace. The other seven to nine seem to have gone to Elizabeth. Can you give us some idea as to what they were about? If not, would you mind if we talk to Elizabeth about them?

Our concern here comes from Senator Baker's continued unease over what he seems to feel is some indication of CIA's relationship with the Watergate group. As you well know, we are convinced there was nothing of this nature, but we want to be able to answer any question about the above, which could well have been revealed by Hunt to Baker or his staff. We have met every one of Baker's specific items to date and believe that this is the only way to avoid difficulties over this frustrating subject.

Sorry to mess up your day with this, and I hope you will understand that we are just doing our homework.

Regards.

Sincerely,


W. E. Colby
Director