

UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET

9 04

302

INT 665/1

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

noted  
correct

Jack: ✓

I'd like to talk

to you about this +

give you a copy to

fill-in on H. H. Kott's

comments on my statement

to you

but the line

SECRET

1227

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE: April 16, 1948

SUBJECT: PUBLICITY ON BOGOTA INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

PARTICIPANTS: CIA - Rear Admiral R. H. Hillenkoetter  
S/S - Mr. Humelsine  
SA-A- Mr. Armstrong

COPIES TO:

*Mr. Pennington*  
*Mr. Bohlen*

Upon entering Admiral Hillenkoetter's office, he said to Mr. Armstrong, "Well, I kept you off the spot, didn't I?" To this Mr. Armstrong replied, "Perhaps, but you certainly put the State Department on it." Admiral Hillenkoetter admitted this.

Admiral Hillenkoetter then described the circumstances of the hearing before the Committee headed by Congressman Clarence Brown on the preceding day. He said that the statement which he had made before the Committee had been shown to Admiral Leahy (and indicated that the President had been consulted in the matter) and that he had then shown it to Secretary Forrestal. He stated that Admiral Leahy and Secretary Forrestal had told him to go ahead with the statement even if it involved a public hearing. Admiral Hillenkoetter stated that the hearing before the Committee had been first in executive session, but that upon its completion, the Chairman had called in the press and required him to read his statement again to the reporters.

Mr. Humelsine requested Admiral Hillenkoetter to explain his references in his testimony to the CIA report allegedly "censored" by a Mr. O. J. Libert at Bogotá. Admiral Hillenkoetter picked up a memorandum, a copy of which is attached, and read it.

The

  
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

INT 665/3

-2-

The memorandum had been prepared, he said, by the CIA Agent [redacted] in Bogota and was an explanation of the Agent's instructions to CIA in Washington that the message he sent on March 23rd should not be forwarded to the State Department. Mr. Humelsine and Mr. Armstrong noted that the statement did not indicate that Ambassador Beaulac had interposed any objection to the message being transmitted to the State Department and that the CIA Agent had accepted unquestioningly the authority of an administrative officer of the International Conferences Division as sufficient to block the transmission of the message. Mr. Armstrong asked why the Agent had not gone back to the Ambassador and urged the sending of the information, if he thought it was important. Admiral Hillenkoetter responded that the Agent had to "live" with the Embassy and therefore could not afford to antagonize the personnel there.

Mr. Humelsine then said to Admiral Hillenkoetter, "It is inconceivable to me that you personally could have had the information to which your man attached such importance and not have sent it to the Department regardless of your subordinate's instructions from Bogota." Admiral Hillenkoetter replied that in hindsight he felt he should have done so and that, in fact, when the information was received, on or about March 23, he had suggested doing so. However, in a discussion of the matter with his Deputy, General E. K. Wright, his Executive Officer, Captain Ford, and Colonel Galloway, the Deputy Director for Special Operations, he had been advised against doing so on the grounds that their man in Bogota would be placed in serious trouble vis-a-vis the Ambassador and the staff.

Admiral Hillenkoetter went on to indicate the general character of the difficulties which his overseas covert operations have encountered at various [redacted] posts. He particularly referred to a situation at [redacted] and pointed out that the man had gone to [redacted] in September 1947 and had not as yet been able to make any official report or even send official word of his arrival on duty. Mr. Humelsine said that this was news to him and, it being a serious matter, would be investigated at once.

Admiral Hillenkoetter then recited the history of the efforts CIA has made to obtain departmental agreement to the enlargement of its overseas staff and said that since July 1947 he had been trying to get [redacted] an additional number of agents without success. He stated that he had talked to Mr. Peurifoy about it last fall and had at first found him sympathetic to his request and to the CIA's staffing problem. After a further delay, Mr. Peurifoy had written him to the effect that the additional

assignments

UNCLASSIFIED

1304

UNCLASSIFIED

INT 665/4

assignments not only would not be granted, but that by January 1st the overseas force would have to be reduced to no more than 200 agents. He recalled that Mr. Pourifoy had subsequently told him that he had signed this letter only with "great reluctance". Admiral Hillenkoetter recounted conversations which he had had with Mr. Armour, Mr. Neal, Mr. Kavndal, and others on the subject in which the divergence of views on the function of CIA in the field became apparent. He stated that he had also talked to Secretary Forrestal and that the latter had talked to Mr. Lovett. It had been agreed between them that the Committee surveying CIA operations headed by Mr. Allen Dulles would attempt to resolve the impasse.

Admiral Hillenkoetter said that the CIA had been unjustifiably, in his opinion, put on the spot by the State Department's failure to release publicly the information which had been given by Lincoln White at a Thursday evening, April 15th, press conference and that he thought the Department deserved whatever heat might now be on it. Mr. Humelsine pointed out that the State Department looked upon this situation as being the responsibility of the Executive branch of the Government, not of one department which could disclaim responsibility by shifting the burden to another. He asked the Director why he had not informed the Department that CIA was under pressure and requested its cooperation. Mr. Humelsine recalled to the Director that he had telephoned him, at Mr. Lovett's request, when he first heard that there would be a congressional investigation and had asked him if there was anything the State Department could do to help. Mr. Armstrong said that he too had telephoned the Director in the same vein and noted that in neither case had the Director indicated that the CIA was under disturbing pressure or that the State Department could, or should, do anything in the circumstances. Admiral Hillenkoetter referred to the fact that the newspapers and radio had continuously indicated that CIA was being held accountable for the alleged intelligence failure at Botots and said that the Department should have known that the only corrective would be to issue a statement on the quantity and quality of information that had been available.

Admiral Hillenkoetter then reverted to the difficulties he has encountered in getting his program implemented through the State Department and the Foreign Service and said that he would much prefer to have relations with the Department centralized in one office and that if he could do all of his

business

UNCLASSIFIED

1305

UNCLASSIFIED

INT 665/5

- 4 -

business with Mr. Armstrong's office, he thought that better results would ensue. He emphasized that his relations with Mr. Armstrong and the substantive side of intelligence were satisfactory, and that he hoped that the Department would take steps to make his relations center in one place. Mr. Humelsine said that he thought this was essential and should be carried into effect and he would so report to Mr. Lovett.

In closing, Admiral Hillenkoetter stated that if relations with the Department did not improve in the near future, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he intended to inform the President and, if necessary, the Congress, that they could not hold him responsible for obtaining the intelligence information that he is charged with at present. He stated that he would have to bring the blocking of his plans by the Department to public notice, since not, in some cases, he is able to get only 60% or less of the information that he should and would get if his program were fully put into effect.

S/S:CHHumelsine:DHM  
SA-A:WArmstrong

UNCLASSIFIED

130

UNCLASSIFIED

INT 665/6

1. On or about 15 March 1948, a request was received from the [redacted] to supply him with detailed information concerning the arrival of General Marshall and the U.S. delegation to the Pan American Conference, scheduled to commence on March 30th. [redacted] explained that he had information to the effect that Communist inspired elements would attempt to embarrass and discredit our Secretary of State and the U.S. delegation upon arrival in Bogota, which was expected by the police to be about March 27th. The purpose of his request was to enable the police to provide adequate protection and thus avoid any incident which might cause the United States or the Colombian Government embarrassment. The police information was to the effect that the Secretary would be assaulted by a hostile demonstration in which rotten eggs and tomatoes would be hurled.

2. Immediately upon receipt of this information the U.S. Ambassador was orally advised by me at his office in the Embassy of all the details. He requested that the information be passed to the Embassy Administrative Officer, Mr. Edward Cruch, and to a Mr. O. J. Libert, an officer of the Division of International Conferences of the State Department, identified to me as the advance agent for the U.S. delegation.

3. The Administrative Officer and Mr. Libert were both advised of these circumstances and requested to supply my office with the necessary information for transmission to the police. Since there was some uncertainty as to the exact arrival dates of General Marshall and the U.S. delegation, these gentlemen were unable to supply the precise information needed, but indicated that they would pass this information to our office when known.

4. Several conferences were held thereafter with Mr. Libert on the subject, during the course of which I suggested that General Marshall be apprised of the gravity of the situation so that he might advise the Embassy of his specific plans for arrival at the Conference. Mr. Libert decided that a cable to the State Department, no matter how highly classified, would pass through too many hands and would, in his opinion, cause alarm. He felt that if it were necessary to communicate with General Marshall on this subject it would be better for him to direct an airmail letter to General Marshall which would be seen by the Secretary only. He concluded therefore that he would like the privilege of advising Mr. Marshall himself if he felt it necessary in the circumstances.

5. Immediately thereafter I requested three proven sources, [redacted], to report at once, any confirming information. On 23 March 1948, I received a report [redacted] that the Communists had devised plans to demonstrate against [redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

INT 665/7

Secretary Marshall and the U.S. Delegation upon their arrival, and that these demonstrations would involve possible personal molestation of U.S. personalities. Since this information confirmed the report we had earlier received [REDACTED], I felt obliged to urge upon Mr. Libert the necessity of supplying us with information on the Secretary's arrival. Even at that late date, it was not known specifically what General Marshall's plans were and since Mr. Libert still felt that notice to General Marshall might cause undue alarm, I elected to send a cable to Washington Headquarters outlining the situation as stated above, and indicating Mr. Libert's position in the matter. My purpose in sending the cable was to indicate that the information was in our hands and that we had done everything within our power to make the information available to the Ambassador and to the State Department's advance agent for the delegates. My request that the information be not passed to the State Department was made solely because of Mr. Libert's expressed wishes that any communication of this matter to Washington be handled by him.

UNCLASSIFIED