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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

33310

5 June 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President  
The Vice President  
The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
Counsellor to the President  
Chief of Staff and Assistant to the President  
Assistant to the President and Deputy Chief of Staff  
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs ✓

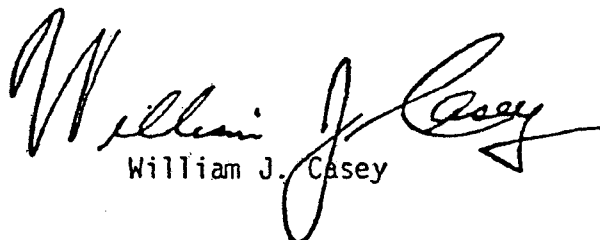
SUBJECT: Leaks

Public disclosure of the intelligence mission from Thailand to Laos to inspect the prisoner camps there and of the State Department papers on South Africa and Namibia would seem to call for specific action to address the problem of leaks.

I would suggest for a first step that the President issue a memorandum to members of the Cabinet and other appropriate senior officials along the lines of the attached. It appears that the last President to issue such a memorandum was President Eisenhower. I attach a copy of the paper he sent.

Should the problem continue, as one would expect that it would, it would seem necessary for the President to take further steps such as these:

- Requiring the head of a department or agency to authorize personally and in writing any discussion with the press by subordinates of matters concerning intelligence or classified information. This could be made still tighter by a requirement that subordinate officials file reports of discussions with outsiders setting forth the information provided, the identity of the recipient and the justification for providing such information.
- As a further sanction all government officials with authorized access to information relating to especially sensitive DoD or intelligence matters might be made subject to a polygraph examination in connection with FBI investigations of specific security breaches. Refusal to take a polygraph examination in these circumstances could be made grounds for dismissal from the government.

  
William J. Casey

Attachment



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33312

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT : Disclosure of Sensitive Intelligence Information

In the past few weeks, there have been some striking public disclosures of sensitive foreign policy issues and NSC deliberations, as well as of highly sensitive intelligence information. In some instances, officials of this government have gone so far as to cite specific intelligence collection capabilities. In other cases, information released on policy has pre-empted my decisions and narrowed my flexibility. Intelligence information has been released that was so specific that any intelligence professional could easily deduce the sources of information. In total, the information and assessments that have appeared in the media give the USSR and other foreign powers substantial insight into our most confidential deliberations and into the capabilities and limitations of US intelligence.

These disclosures must stop. Disclosure of national security and intelligence information threatens the effectiveness of this Administration and the intelligence capabilities of the US. In the area of intelligence it gives our adversaries information that allows them better to conceal their actions from us. In both the policy and intelligence arenas, each revelation of facts inspires new questions and leads to new requests for clarification and elaboration. When closely held information appears in the press only hours after a meeting or dissemination to senior officials, security discipline is undermined at all levels of government. When senior officials are known to be the source of harmful disclosure, they lose the confidence of their colleagues and the respect of their subordinates. Moreover, foreign sources and governments are complaining about our laxness because we are jeopardizing their policy interests and their intelligence activities as well as our own.

It is clear to me that the current problem stems from the pursuit of desirable objectives with an inadequate appreciation of the harm that is being done. We unquestionably need the cooperation and support of our allies on matters related to our mutual defense obligations. It is important that the American public be well informed on subjects of major consequence. But we cannot allow ourselves to satisfy these needs at the expense of the effective formulation of national security policies and of our present and future intelligence capabilities.

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BY LBI NARA, DATE 1/14/08

In those instances where disclosure of classified information is deemed necessary, I consider each of you personally responsible for ensuring full compliance by your organization with applicable orders and regulations. Any public disclosure initiative by someone in your organization must have your approval. Any disclosure--including release to foreign governments--involving national intelligence assets requires the prior approval of the Director of Central Intelligence as well. The Director is responsible to me for protection of intelligence sources and methods and stands ready to assist you with any additional guidance that is needed.

The time has come to reverse the flood of damaging disclosures of sensitive information. Our national security depends upon this and I intend to fulfill my responsibilities in this regard. I expect each of you to do no less.

Ronald Reagan