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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 10, 1960

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT
(Tuesday, 9 February 1960 at 11:45 a.m.)

1. I first took up the Record of Actions of the NSC meeting of February 4. I told the President that the only difficulty was in Paragraph 3 b. I recommended to him that a period be placed after February 15, and that the remainder of the sentence be taken out. I felt this would meet the needs of the situation, although not every agency would be entirely happy.

2. I then discussed with the President, Mannie Sprague's recommendation that a modest low-key press release of the appointment of the President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad be put out. The President said that he thought it might be better if Mannie Sprague could be considered a consultant to the President so that no report would be indicated. I pointed out to the President that C. D. Jackson and Phil Reed were also involved; that there would be staff for the committee; and that in Mr. Sprague's judgment and in mine as well, the operation could not be kept a secret one. I said that Mr. Sprague and I both felt that a brief announcement, which wouldn't do much more than indicate the existence of the committee, would eliminate a lot of speculation. The members of the Committee then could simply stand on the President's announcement.

The President said that he was very wary of reports which the press and public demanded be made public. I reminded the President that as far as the old Jackson Committee of 1953 was concerned, an announcement was made of the formation of the Committee and later a sanitized version of the Committee's report had been made public and there had been no difficulty with it.

The President then read the draft press release which I prepared for his approval, and he struck out the language, "with particular reference to international relations." The draft approved by him is attached.

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He then said that he wished it fully understood by Mannie Sprague if there was to be a report to the President that the Committee should bear in mind that there should be one report which would go to the President which would not be made public and another prepared for public consumption.

3. I presented to the President a letter for his signature appointing Mr. John F. Doherty, Chairman of the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security, vice Mr. J. Walter Yeagley resigned. I told the President that The Attorney General had recommended this appointment. The President signed the letter.

4. I then brought up the question of increased nuclear sharing with our allies, which had been the subject of some discussion at the President's press conference of February 3. The President said that he had simply said in the press conference what he believed and what he had said before. I observed to the President that I had heard him say the same thing at least four times in NSC meetings in forceable terms but that the State Department hadn't really agreed. He wondered what the problems of the State Department were and I said that it was primarily the proliferation of nuclear weapons without any control and what they generally referred to as the nth country problem.

I reminded the President that this was one of the discussion topics which we were working on and that I had discussed this with him in December upon his return from his trip. The President then said perhaps he had spoken too hastily in the press conference. I suggested that on the contrary, it would be helpful for him to have made the reference at his press conference because we would now be in a position to move along with the discussion paper without successful resistance from the State Department. He asked us to proceed as rapidly as we could.

5. I then reported to the President on a meeting of the Planning Board of February 5 with the seven consultants who came to discuss major national security problems. I said that I felt impelled to report one particular matter to the President, and that was Mr. John J. McCloy's concern about the missile situation. Mr. McCloy had said he was getting increasing reports from around the country and from prominent and responsible people that they were confused and in some cases concerned. I said to the President that I felt that we should take seriously the concern of such individuals as Jack McCloy as distinguished from much of the political talking that is going on. I said I felt that this was the same thing that underlay Mr. McCone's observation at the February 4 NSC meeting.

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The President said that he had discussed this with the Legislative Leaders earlier in the day and that he had concluded that he would go on television for 15 minutes. I asked him whether he intended also to refer to the so-called "space lag" and he emphatically replied that he did not. I agreed that it would be wise to confine it solely to the Defense situation.

6. I then briefly discussed with the President progress in the OCB in the period which I had served as Chairman. He was interested in my judgment that the change had been beneficial to the work of the Board.

7. I received the President's approval to proceed with the CIA and other responsible agencies on a program of tightening procedures with respect to two highly sensitive clearances in the same way I was working on COMINT clearances.



Gordon Gray

Gordon Gray
Special Assistant to the President

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