

Ford Appeals to keep secret the
Assassinations report

Secret

Rewritten

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
October 31, 1975

Awes

Dear

I am writing to urge the Select Committee not to make public the report on the subject of assassinations which I understand is currently in preparation. Review of the Select Committee's draft assassination report by officials of the Departments of State and Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency, who examined it at the request of your Committee, have been submitted to me by the heads of those departments and the agency. Under separate cover, I am providing these classified reviews for your consideration. Their substance was previously communicated to the Select Committee staff by the reviewing officials. I also want to offer my views on this matter and appeal to the Committee not to release this report publicly.

It is my opinion that public disclosure now of information I provided to the Senate Select Committee concerning allegations of political assassination activities of the United States Government will result in grievous harm to the national interest and may endanger individuals.

As I stated publicly when the allegations were published, the very idea that any person or organization within the United States Government could consider assassination as an acceptable act is abhorrent. I know you share this view and a determination to make certain that such deeds will never take place in the future.

To facilitate legitimate investigation of allegations related to assassination, I made available all the materials in the Executive Branch on this subject to the Select Committees of the Senate

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958 Sec. 3.6



Declassified
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and the House and the Department of Justice. This was done under procedures designed to serve the national interest. The materials were turned over in classified form. You will recall that I said on June 9, 1975:

"I know that the Members of the Congress involved will exercise utmost prudence in the handling of such information."

I have no personal or political reason to prevent public disclosure of this information. The allegations relate entirely to past Administrations of both parties. It is not a question of withholding information required by the Select Committee to carry out its inquiry. On the contrary, I have endeavored to make all of the information available to your Committee so that legislation can be proposed, if necessary, and to the Justice Department to facilitate any investigation indicated. However, we must distinguish between disclosure to the Select Committee of sensitive information and publication of that information which is harmful to the national interest and may endanger the physical safety of individuals.

There is no question about access to these materials by appropriate officials. The only issue concerns publication which obviously cannot be limited to Members of Congress and other American citizens.

Public release of these official materials and information will do grievous damage to our country. It would likely be exploited by foreign nations and groups hostile to the United States in a manner designed to do maximum damage to the reputation and foreign policy of the United States. It would seriously impair our ability to exercise a positive leading role in world affairs.

I am convinced that publication at this time will endanger individuals named in the report or who can be identified when foreign agents carefully study it. I am sure none of us want such an unfortunate result. I urge that we avoid any action that would bring it about.

I have sought to balance the competing interests involved in this matter. To protect the rights of individuals and the integrity



of American moral principles, the Constitution and laws, I made all relevant intelligence information and documents available to the appropriate Committees of Congress and the Department of Justice. To protect our national defense and ability to conduct foreign affairs as well as the traditional American right of individual privacy, I have provided most of this information in classified form.

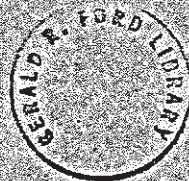
There can be legislation, if deemed necessary, and prosecutions, if warranted. But let us do this without the damage to the United States, which will occur if this information is made available to actual and potential enemies of the United States.

I appeal to you and your colleagues on the Senate Select Committee, in the highest national interest, to oppose publication of this report on alleged assassination activity.

If the Select Committee elects to ignore my recommendation, it must bear responsibility for the damage which will result to the United States and harm which may result to individuals.

Sincerely,

The Honorable
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510



WH: Letter, Pres Gerald R. Ford - Each US Senator

Draft Mr. appealing to keep Church assassinations

Support secret

Oct 31, 1975

SOURCE: front