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Subject: Request of President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull that I coordinate the activities of the investigating agencies of our government.

It was some time towards the middle of 1939, I will be able to fix the time of the date of the visit of the King and Queen of England, that Secretary Hull called me to his office, and informed me that the President had just asked him to talk with me about a new duty which he wished me to undertake. The President had been concerned, he said, for a long time with the duplication of activities between the investigating agencies of our government. He had particular reference to the activities of Military Intelligence and Naval Intelligence which were the investigating agencies of the Army and Navy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. These three agencies, he found, were often following the same matter at the same time and constantly crossing each other's tracks. At the same time the Secret Service of the White House, certain agents which we had in the Department of State, and the Treasury agents were often working on the same matter as the three more important and more heavily staffed agencies already mentioned. The duplication was not only interfering with the best results but it was costly. We were in serious times and it was ^{essential} ~~natural~~ that we have the best possible information that we needed from the field in our own country. The President wished me to undertake the coordination of the activities of these agencies. It was not a question of the elimination of any of them. The President was of the opinion that if the heads of these agencies, under the leadership of one person, coordinated their activities through regular contact that the efficiency of performance would be greatly increased. He knew that I had a great deal to do but the intention was not to saddle me with this coordinating responsibility definitely but that I should establish the coordination and, once it became a matter of routine, it could be turned over to someone else. Before I could make any protest, Secretary Hull added that he had informed the President

that I already had so much to do and was so much overburdened and had been given so many additional tasks that he doubted whether I could, with the best will, undertake it as my health would not permit it.

I thanked the Secretary for what he had said to the President and that I did not see how it was physically possible for me to undertake this additional task; I was getting to the Department at eight in the morning and seldom got home before eight in the evening unless I had to go to a dinner engagement. I was at the Department all Saturday every Saturday and on Sunday usually from nine until two. In order to keep up it was increasingly necessary for me to take papers home and even to see people at home in the evening. If I was really any use it was much better **not** to overburden me this way because if I was given additional tasks there could be only one result, that I would be carried out of the Department one day on a stretcher and probably be **useless** for a long time. The Secretary repeated that he had brought this situation to the attention of the President and that the President and he thoroughly understood it but he thought I should make at least an effort to see what **could** be done.

I asked the Secretary whether the President had given any instructions to the heads of these agencies. I said that there were probably no agencies of our government that were more zealous in protecting what they considered their field. All government agencies were like that but the investigating agencies were even more difficult in this respect than the others. I added that there was a further peculiarity with respect to these investigating agencies which had to be borne in mind and that was that no one trusted the other. They were even loathe to exchange information, they all had their separate ways of working and they did not like to disclose sources of information or the way in which they worked on a particular matter. I agreed completely that it

was desirable to coordinate the work of these agencies. In the much smaller area which fell within my purview I had seen this duplication which the President had referred to. I was extremely doubtful whether anything could be done about it in the manner desired by the President but that I would see what could be done.

With reference to my request as to whether the heads of these agencies had been informed of the President's desire, the Secretary said that it was the President's desire that I see them separately first and inform them of his wishes and then get them together to discuss the matter. The matter was to be kept entirely confidential. So far as possible it was not to go beyond the President and the Secretary and myself and the heads of these agencies. I went ahead with what seemed to be really a hopeless task, but realizing the purposes which the President had in mind I knew it was my duty to make a try.

I saw the heads of each one of these agencies separately. After explaining to them the instructions which I had received, I asked them to have dinner with me at my home in Georgetown on a fixed evening. After dinner we would discuss the matter. I knew all of the heads of these agencies quite well as I had contact with them constantly on behalf of the Department. They received me in a friendly way but received my message without comment. They said they would be at the dinner on the evening I had fixed. The evening of the dinner came and all the heads of these agencies arrived promptly with the exception of one (Mr. Hoover of the FBI). We had dinner promptly at the time set. The missing member of the group did not arrive during dinner. He was the head of one of the most important agencies. After dinner we gathered in the library and I again explained what instructions I had received from the President through the Secretary. I made it clear that I had not taken any initiative in this matter. I considered it the duty of all of

us to collaborate. The atmosphere was cold and formal. The antagonisms were not personal towards me nor towards each other. They represented the attitudes of their respective agencies. They did not want this coordination. After I had made this preliminary outline of what we were there for, the head of one agency spoke up and said that he thought it was useless to discuss the matter until Mr. X who was missing would be present. Several of the others nodded their agreement. I knew it was useless to endeavor to go ahead that evening and ~~waste~~ their time and mine. I therefore simply said that we would meet a week hence on the same evening when all would be present.

I informed the Secretary the following morning of the results of my efforts so far and he agreed that the only thing to do was for me to inform the President, which I did. The President was visibly upset, which he seldom was, when I saw him. He immediately called Mr. X on the telephone and simply said that he understood he had not been present at a meeting which had been held at my home the evening before and that had I explained to Mr. X the instructions which I had received. The reply was obviously a laconic "Yes". The President said that the next meeting would be held at my home on a given evening and that he was to be there, if not, he was to send his resignation in without delay. As this was the first direct conversation I had with the President on the matter, I explained to him the difficulties in the way of doing what he wished done, desirable as it was. The President said he realized the difficulties from the outset but that he wished me to go ahead and do my best. He gave some examples that he had noted of the unfortunate results growing out of several agencies working on the same matter at the same time and without being in touch with each other. There was, he said, to be no endeavor to break down the organization or the work of the respective agencies. It was his idea that I should have regular

meetings with the heads of these agencies, that we were to discuss fully and frankly and freely, and exchange information, and that if agreement could not be reached among each other which agency or agencies should follow a given matter, I was to determine which agency or agencies should occupy themselves with the matter. If I had any difficulty I was to inform him immediately. He was set on the thing being given a good trial.

I gave the matter a great deal of thought after the conversation with the President. I discussed it with several of my associates in the Department who would, in any event, have to collaborate with me in my own task and who had long experience in matters of this kind. I then discussed it with the **Secretary** and told him what I was going to propose at the next meeting. The Secretary gave his approval. The next meeting was held and all were present. I could feel an atmosphere of resistance; everybody was coldly polite to everybody else. I tried to ease the atmosphere during dinner and my wife had seen that they had a good dinner. When we got together in the drawing-room it was quite obvious that every one of them was closed up in his own box. I made it very clear that the directions from the President, whom I had ~~again~~ seen, were formal and binding. I said that I understood the problems of each one of our agencies; I realized the positions and situations which had grown up over the years, that was no reason why there should not be this coordination when it was so obviously in the public interest. I was determined, for my part, to carry through. I set forth the results of my thinking. I cannot here go into the matter further as to the proposals which I made as these activities were highly secret then and must remain so in the interest of our security. The atmosphere eased up a good deal. All except one of the agency heads spoke up and said that he would use his best efforts to collaborate. One said nothing. I knew that that would not be a problem. We then discussed the plan which I had set forth. All

agreed that it was a reasonable one. We agreed on regular weekly meetings. We agreed on an agenda for the meetings which had, of course, to be a flexible one. On the basis of the plan of collaboration which I had set forth we immediately began to discuss cases that same evening and set in motion the machinery for collaboration.

From some of the heads of these agencies it became clear at the following meetings that there was full collaboration. From others it was obvious that they did not trust their colleagues. At the end of one of the weekly meetings one of the men said to me after the meeting was over that he regretted that he could not take a more forthcoming attitude on a certain matter which had been discussed; there was one man whom he did not trust and he had not been able to give me before all of them certain information which he then proceeded to give me and which was of primary importance. I think I finally convinced this particular member of our group that his attitude was altogether improper and, more than that, unjustified. It is sufficient to say here that through the course of the months that followed we were able to reach really an effective machinery of exchange of information, allocation of work, and this constant close contact of the heads of the agencies in itself was, of course, of inestimable value. As the weeks went on we all realized that the President's directive had been a wise one. We all knew, and I certainly knew, that we were not reaching the full degree of collaboration and exchange of information that was necessary. I thought that this would come with time. When I left the Department early in 1940 to go to Cuba as Ambassador, the machinery was working quite well. I do not know what happened after I left the Department. It was no longer proper for me to even ask anything about it as the whole operation was a secret and highly confidential one. I had some reason to believe that the machinery broke down after a while. This was unfortunate because the

need for what the President had in mind was there. All sorts of impossible schemes were proposed to the President for a consolidation of the investigating agencies. Some of this discussion became public and it served no useful purpose. I have wanted to make reference to this initiative of the President in this detail and to set forth what was done because it was this original idea which finally led to the formation of the Central Intelligence Agency under the able direction of General Bedell Smith, and afterwards that of Mr. *Alban* Dulles, when Bedell Smith took over the duties of Under-Secretary of State. The Central Intelligence Agency has developed an effective machinery which is serving a useful purpose and, I believe, doing its work adequately in these dangerous times in which we live. It is my considered opinion that the criticism which has been directed at the Agency publicly and by certain members of Congress is not justified. There are certain matters which have to be carried on secretly and of which the details cannot be made known more than to a few responsible heads of our government. It is men like McCarthy who set themselves above every one and who believe themselves to be omnipotent and omniscient and who consider themselves the only capable and honest men in our country who are behind most of this criticism which has been made of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The word 'security' has become a very important one in our language in these days. The screening of persons for public employment and for certain positions is absolutely essential. With the Communist government following the methods which it does there is only one procedure which we can follow. But this security problem is not a new one as so many seem to think. As early as 1937, when I came into the Department as an Assistant Secretary of State and had the administration of the Department and of the Foreign Service as a part of my activity, I had

before me almost every day the consideration of whether a certain individual could properly be employed or whether he should be eliminated. We had really no problem in handling this situation at that time. If we had doubts about a person's loyalty we simply did not employ him. We said nothing about it but he was simply not taken on. If we had any doubts concerning the loyalty of someone already in the Department or in its services, and the same applied I know to many of the other agencies and departments of our government, the individual was quietly told that his services were no longer needed. There were many ways in which a person could be removed from government employ without raising hue and cry and scandal. If it came to the point of preremptorily making it known to an individual that he could no longer continue in the service, it was usually sufficient to make that clear. This arrived only in cases where there was absolutely no doubt in our minds as to the person's loyalty. When he was talked to in this preremptory way, without the question of loyalty in any way being raised, he knew that the thing to do was to resign because his own self-interest told him that the best thing for him was to get out without scandal. This procedure was followed in the Department during the three years that I was there as Assistant Secretary. I know that it was followed by other Departments as well. It was highly effective.

As time went on increasingly efforts were made by improper people to get into the government service, and in spite of, in those days, the best efforts of those responsible, many improper people did get into positions where they were doing harm to our government. It was ^{is coming} ~~still~~ possible to cope with the situation, because when in high place ⁵ statements were made such as "a red herring being laid on the trail" and when certain high administrative officers of the agencies of our government no longer permitted the same precautions to be used in employing and the same energy

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to be used in discharging, that the public scandals inevitably occurred, ~~and~~ the fact that McCarthy and his methods could create almost a national crisis was not so much the responsibility of McCarthy as it was of those who had made McCarthy possible.

Elsewhere in these notes I will speak of security measures in practice and the necessity therefore. At this point I wish only to say that even if from time to time an innocent person may suffer as the result of these security practices, it is better that a few individuals should suffer than that our national security and of all of our people should be endangered. It resolves itself to that plain issue.

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