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involved themselves in political assassinations, but under their system they at least have a better prospect of keeping it concealed. Since we do like a free society and since these secrets are going to come out in due course, the revelation will then do serious injury to the good name and reputation of the United States.

Would you agree with that?

Mr. Helms. Yes, I would.

The Chairman. And finally, if we were to reserve to ourselves the prerogative to assassinate foreign leaders, we may invite reciprocal action from foreign governments who assume that if it's our prerogative to do so, it is their prerogative as well, and that is another danger that we at least invite with this kind of action, wouldn't you agree?

Mr. Helms. Yes, sir. (6/13/75, pp. 76-78)

Similarly, John McCone said he was opposed to assassinations because:

I didn't think it was proper from the standpoint of the U.S. Government and the Central Intelligence Agency. (6/6/75, p. 15)

B. CIA Directives Banning Assassination. In 1972 and 1973, Helms and then Colby issued internal CIA orders banning assassination. In his order, Helms said:

It has recently again been alleged in the press that CIA engages in assassination. As you are well aware, this is not the case, and Agency policy has long been clear on this issue. To underline it, however, I direct that no such activity or operation be undertaken, assisted or suggested by any of our personnel.... (Memorandum, Helms to Deputy Directors, 3/6/72)

Colby, in one of a series of orders in August 1973 arising out of the Agency's own review of prior "questionable activity," issued an order which stated:

CIA will not engage in assassination nor induce, assist or suggest to others that assassination be employed. (Memorandum, Colby to Deputy Directors, 8/29/73)

