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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: May 10, 1968

FROM : A. Rosen

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Malley
1 - Mr. McGowan
1 - Mr. Long

SUBJECT: MURKIN

This case involves the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

PURPOSE:

To recommend that the Washington Field Office be authorized to discuss the reviewing of passports with the [redacted] Passport Office and that the Rhodesian authorities at Salisbury, Rhodesia, be requested to review their records from April 5, 1968, to present date. This will be to determine if a passport has been issued to subject James Earl Ray.

BACKGROUND:

Information has been received that subject as Eric S. Galt, 1535 North Serrano, Los Angeles, California, on 12/28/67, directed a letter to Mr. John Acord, Chairman, American-Southern Africa Council, Washington, D. C., making an inquiry about possible travel to Rhodesia.

The Washington Field Office advises that passports may be applied for by any citizen at any of several thousand clerks of court offices at various cities in the United States. Each passport agency maintains information based on applications received from citizens, and this information is forwarded to Washington, D. C. The Passport Office, Washington, D. C., files this information which is maintained by year. A preliminary examination of these records at Washington, D. C., would eliminate all non-Caucasians, all females, all children and all males outside the 25 to 50 age group. A list of the remaining ones could be prepared and then the actual passport application containing photographs of the applicants, reviewed for photograph comparison and elimination could be completed. There were approximately one million passports issued in the year 1967. This review would, of course, be approached in the most reasonable and logical manner.

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COPY SENT TO MR. TOLSON

Memo Rosen to DeLoach
RE: MURKIN

Washington Field Office advises that the purpose of the discussion with the [redacted] Passport Office would be to get estimates on the number of cards to be reviewed and to obtain permission for Special Agent personnel to have direct access to the entire Passport Office file room to carry out this project. The Washington Field Office believes that permission could be obtained without difficulty, and they would limit the number of Agents to ten to conduct the search due to space limitations. If the subject has departed from the United States with a United States passport under an assumed name, it is felt that the foregoing project would possibly have excellent chance of identifying him. Washington Field Office recommends that any formal request for review of records at Rhodesian government be held in abeyance until completion of Passport Office survey.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. It is recommended that the Washington Field Office be authorized to discuss the reviewing of passport records with the [redacted] Passport Office.

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2. It is further recommended that Washington Field Office be immediately instructed to request the State Department to cause a review of the records of the Rhodesian authorities regarding any information they have concerning individuals entering the country from April 5, 1968 to the present date. This should not be limited to citizens of the United States only but should cover all male Caucasians between the ages of 25 and 50 in view of the fact that subject Ray could have possibly obtained a passport from the Mexican and Canadian authorities. It is noted that this type of check would only be for a period of approximately one month.

discussed w/ [redacted] State Sy, 5/14/68
State will handle.
RDR