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July 9, 1947

Honorable John E. Peurifoy  
Assistant Secretary of State  
Department of State  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Peurifoy:

We are transmitting herewith affidavits of five employees of the Department of State who were on June 23, 1947, dismissed from that Department under the McCarran Rider to the Department of State Appropriation Act, 1947, Public Law 490. They were given dismissal notices with no statement of reasons and this was followed by newspaper publicity based on a State Department press release announcing that they were dismissed for reasons of security.

The employees have all had good records with the Department and have had previous clearance by investigating agencies, most of them having been cleared for top secret work in the Department. Four of the five have never been questioned by any investigator and had no indication of any suspicion of them. The fifth was given a rigorous questioning in major part concerned with official duties which he believed had been completely cleared up by the testimony of his superior.

The Secretary of State in a press conference stated that the dismissals were because of indirect association with representatives of foreign powers. The affidavits specifically deny any association, directly or indirectly, with anyone known or suspected by them of being a representative of a foreign power.

Four of the five people have academic backgrounds and their only hope of future employment in the fields in which they have spent their lives, if not completely destroyed, is seriously impaired by the announcement of the Department publicly accusing them of involvement with foreign powers. While their names have not been published, it is clear that their identity cannot be concealed from persons in the Department and that in seeking academic or other employment they will not and cannot conceal the circumstances surrounding their summary dismissal.

If there is no basis for charges against them, as the attached affidavits state, I am sure you will agree that a serious and grave injustice has been done.

Honorable John E. Peurifoy

July 9, 1947

If there is any basis for the charges, justice to the employees as well as public confidence in the Department of State requires that they be confronted with specific charges and given an opportunity to meet them.

Under all the circumstances recited above, I suggest that in fairness to the employees their names should be cleared and that they should be permitted to resign from the State Department with a clear record and that all communications from prospective employers be answered on the basis of an honorable resignation. None of these employees has any desire to return to the employ of the Department of State in the light of the action which has been taken and none of them desires any further publicity.

We are leaving these papers with you and urge the importance of prompt attention.

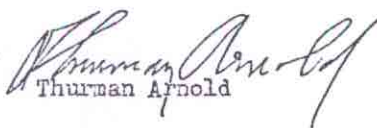
The Secretary of State has publicly indicated that an appeal to him is in order and we shall, of course, avail ourselves of such an appeal in the event that it is not possible to settle the matter amicably without recourse to his personal intervention.

We are sure that your own personal sense of fairness is such that you will see the justice of our suggestion that the employees in question be cleared by being permitted honorable resignation, or that they be given an opportunity to defend themselves by a statement of specific charges.

Yours very truly,

ARNOLD, FORTAS & PORTER

By

  
Thurman Arnold

Attachments