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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 18, 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL KATZENBACH

SUBJECT: Public Disclosure of Warren Commission Reports and Working Papers

1. Attached at Tab 1 is a copy of a letter which the President recently received from Mayor Robert Johnson of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and which objects rather strongly to a report that the National Archives will not make available to the public, for 75 years, certain Warren Commission records. On receiving this letter, we asked National Archives for a background memo on the subject and for a suggested reply to Mayor Johnson.

National Archives has met our request and attached at Tab 2 is a copy of a GSA memo, with enclosures, which recommends that Warren Commission records be treated on the same basis as other investigative records and that, generally speaking, they not be made available to the public for a period of 75 years.

2. While the GSA memo seems to me to have some merit, in view of the very special nature of the Warren Commission investigation and the desirability of the fullest possible disclosure of all the findings, I believe that a further study should be made on the feasibility and advisability of making an exception, in this particular case, to the normal 75-year disclosure procedure. In this regard, and because of the legal ramifications involved, I would appreciate it very much if you would direct the Justice Department, in consultation with other appropriate agencies, to coordinate this study. The study should include, but not necessarily be limited to, answers to such questions as the following:

- (a) What alternatives are there to the 75-year procedure which would meet the aim of "fullest possible disclosure" and, at the same time, not violate the national security or the dictates of good sense? For example, can some or most of the material be released in two years? Five years? Can certain categories of the public (e. g. scholars) receive special treatment?
- (b) How does the Warren Commission view this problem (particularly the Chief Justice and Lee Rankin)?

McGeorge Bundy

cc: Acting Administrator  
Knott, GSA

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