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A/ISS/IPS, Department of State  
E.O. 12958, as amended  
June 19, 2008

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

6 FEB 1976

Honorable Brent Scowcroft  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Brent:

(S) I have received your memorandum of January 21, 1976, concerning the formation of a study group to assist the President in making a decision on the future of the Special Operations Field Office in Berlin (SOF0). Mr. Richard V. Kearney, Principal Deputy General Counsel of the Army will be the Defense Department's representative on the study group.

(S) As you probably are aware, the issue has been the subject of considerable correspondence and discussion between State and Defense over an extended period of time. Essentially, the Defense position is that the Army should not now be engaged in the types of activities performed by SOF0. Our reasons are:

1. The SOF0 does not contribute directly to the Army mission but rather serves primarily CIA, national or foreign intelligence and diplomatic purposes.

2. The mission of SOF0 was acquired by the Army solely by virtue of expediency in view of the role the Army played in the occupation of Germany following World War II.

3. The U.S. Army is not a major consumer of SOF0 products. The major customer of SOF0 is the CIA (over one-half), with foreign governmental agencies second. The primary function of SOF0 is collecting foreign intelligence information. In comparison to these prime users, Army and other U.S. governmental agencies have been customers to an insignificant degree (less than 15%).

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EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 2  
DECLASSIFY ON 31 Dec 2006

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4. The four U.S. civilian personnel and 106 German local wage rate employees, who combined comprise the management and technical expertise of SOFO, could easily be transferred to another agency. Over 90% of the costs of SOFO is paid out of funds contributed by German authorities. The minimal military commitment of five personnel devoted to routine management tasks is largely symbolic and hence is dispensable.

5. Although we have no qualms over the legality or propriety of those limited activities of SOFO which are initiated by the Army and are related to the performance of Army missions, we do regard it as highly questionable whether the Army, especially in the present climate, should be tasked to continue to perform functions which are clearly outside the ambit of traditional military missions or responsibilities.

(S) I agree the study group should carefully evaluate the values --current and future-- of the activities now being conducted by SOFO. If it is concluded that their continuation benefits other U.S. agencies or foreign governments, I am confident that acceptable alternatives to the present arrangement can be developed.

Sincerely,



Robert Ellsworth

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