



MEMORANDUM

To: Files

February 15, 1968

From: E. U. Condon *EUC*

Subject: Supplement to 12 February 1968 memo of R. J. Low to files.

I am in full agreement with the statements made by R. J. Low about the interviews which he and I had with David A. Saunders and Norman E. Levine. These interviews were held between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on February 7. They were principally motivated by a desire to learn the circumstances by which James McDonald had come into possession of an internal CU memorandum. The fact of McDonald's having the memorandum became known to us from remarks made on p. 5 of a long letter from McDonald to Low dated January 31, and received here on February 6.

Perhaps it is useful to clarify the sense in which outside circulation of the stolen memorandum might do damage to the project. In the first place, whether it really could do damage or not is questionable, but both Saunders and Levine declared that they expected that McDonald would use it with intent to do damage and that they gave it to McDonald with the full awareness that they believed he would try to use it in this way. This one factor, I believe, played the biggest role in my determination that these men had no further usefulness to the project, and led to their being discharged, notices being delivered the next day. I feel so strongly on this point that I recommend that the University administration investigate the question whether, in the case of Saunders, this is moral turpitude of sufficient gravity to warrant his complete separation from the University faculty.

The sense in which McDonald expects to try to cause damage through possession of the memorandum is already clear. For a long time both he and Major Donald Keyhoe, director of NICAP, have been making statements to the effect that we have been hired to "whitewash" the Air Force by reaching findings against the reality of the UFO problem and by recommending a cutting out of future governmentally supported work in this area. By quoting out of context they will undoubtedly try to support this thesis by their use of the stolen memorandum.

We have been careful not to reach any conclusion before the end of our work so their belief about the nature of our report is an inference on their part without any factual basis.

It is quite clear now from McDonald's letters and speeches and from the articles in the "U.F.O. Investigator (NICAP publication) that this kind of an attack will be made on our study, with or without future use of the stolen memorandum.

On February 9 I telephoned to A. R. Kassandra, director of the Institute for Atmospheric Physics at the University of Arizona to request his informal help in trying to persuade McDonald to return the stolen memorandum and make no use of it. He said he had already been told by McDonald that he knew that a number of other people have copies of it and therefore felt justified in keeping

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a copy. The argument seems to be that it is alright to be a receiver of stolen property if other people also are. It was apparent that this approach would be unsuccessful so I did not press it.

On February 12 at 4 p.m. Roger Harkins of the Boulder Daily Camera came to my office to tell me that three weeks ago a person not on the staff of our project came to the Camera and gave them a copy of the stolen memorandum, urging them to use it in adverse criticism of our work. They have held off and Harkins' approach was that they would not use it unless they could see a way to use it constructively.

By inference both of the incidents in the preceding paragraph lead me to believe that Saunders and Levine have probably circulated a number of copies of the stolen memorandum. Any future interrogation of either of them ought to cover this point. If they distributed a number of copies it adds to the seriousness of their admitted guilt in having stolen it for McDonald.

By the "conspiracy hypothesis" in paragraph 5 of Low's memorandum is meant the thesis that the Government knows a great deal about UFOs as visitors from outer space, but is keeping it secret. Some say the Air Force knows all and that our project is just a diversionary study to lead the public to think otherwise. Some even say that it is really the C.I.A. which knows and conceals all and that the total Air Force effort, including our little role, is to divert public attention from the C.I.A. This conspiracy idea plays a great role in the politics of UFOlogy but is hardly a scientific question. We decided at the outset to regard it as outside the scope of our planned efforts, but at the same time, decided all of us would keep on the alert for indications bearing on the charge and that we would include such evidence if any came our way. This decision was made on practical grounds for we are hardly in a position to do an effective espionage job on our Government, except to the extent of accidental disclosures. Both Saunders and Levine disagree with that decision and think we should have energetically sought to discover a conspiracy. An interesting expression of the conspiracy view is given in the attached clipping from the Berkeley (California) Daily Gazette from February 8 which is relevant here in showing the prevalence of this notion. [Attachment A]

About Levine's complaint of our not getting certain reports (middle of p. 2 of RJL memo) I had been aware of their existence but believed, and still believe there is nothing of importance in them, for they were a series of interim administrative reports which culminated in Special Report 14. In any case, we undertook to get them for Levine as soon as he asked for them.

On February 14 1968 I received a short note from McDonald [Attachment B] enclosing a copy of a letter [Attachment C] which he had written to President Frederick Seitz of the National Academy of Sciences. In these he announces his intent to press forward at once with a major attack on our project. Study of the new document that he is preparing may well show that he has been supplied other materials from our files and I shall look forward with interest to reading it to see what it reveals from this point of view.

End of Memo

Prof. James E. McDonald

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our project, I suppose that you will refuse the cooperation requested, but I still hope that you will answer that request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "E. U. Condon".

E. U. Condon

EUC:kes

cc - Dr. A. Richard Kassander
- Dr. Frederick Seitz