



ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

December 21, 1983

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Hodding Carter Interview

You have agreed to do a 30-minute on-camera interview with Hodding Carter today at 2:30 p.m. in the PA studio. Carter, who was the State Department spokesman during the previous administration, has a PBS series called "Inside Story." The series, which ran for 13 weeks last year, was widely acclaimed as the best media critic show on television. He attempts to be balanced, but his experience at State Department made him critical of pack-journalism, sensationalism, leaks, and commercial interests overriding journalistic ethics. The taping today will be his 1984 premier (January 20). The program is entitled: "Whose News Is It?" It will deal with government public relations, proper balance between journalist's right to know, people's right to news and government's need to protect national security.

I recommended your participation because of the controversy surrounding our press policies in Grenada and the general perception of some that the military is anti-press.

The interview will probably cover the topics below. I have included points you may want to make.

LEAKS

- Leaks drive up the cost of defense. When national security information reaches our enemies through the press or any other means, it diminishes the effectiveness of our defense. We must then spend more to offset the advantage the other side has gained.
- Leaks endanger the security of the nation and needlessly jeopardize the safety of our military men and women, government officials, and the lives of Americans in general.
- Even leaks of internal discussions and deliberations in advance of final decisions can harm security and diplomacy. Unauthorized reporting of internal deliberations can inhibit a free exchange of ideas and may deny decision-makers access to opinions from all sides.



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PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- This is the most open government in the world. I wouldn't want that to change. Our military personnel and government officials have taken an oath to defend our Constitution which provides for free speech and a free press. That freedom to speak and print does not include the right to endanger the Republic or its citizens.
- I want to maintain the openness of this department while at the same time not jeopardize the security of the nation or endanger the lives of our military personnel. (Principles of Information - attached)

POLYGRAPHS

- Changes in the directives could permit, not require, agencies to use a limited polygraph examination confined solely to security questions (rather than lifestyle) as a condition of providing access to our most important classified information -- special access, cryptographic. It would be limited to questions such as whether the person is engaging in espionage. The National Security Agency has occasionally discovered individuals, through use of the polygraph, who appeared to have been sent here by hostile intelligence services to obtain employment.

GRENADA

- The short time involved for planning and the need for absolute secrecy did not allow us to include the press during the initial phase of the operation. We originally hoped to bring in press pools at the end of the first day or after there was no longer any danger of a hostage situation. The objectives were not achieved until the end of the second day. We formed press pools the next morning.
- Our actions in Grenada do not signal a similar policy for all future operations. We will always try to include, not exclude, the press.
- My statements of concern for safety of the press are sincere. I know that journalists are willing to give their lives for their profession. Nonetheless, in relation to Grenada, I worried about a Cuban shooting a newsman or worse, newsmen coming under fire from our

own forces as they might attempt to cover both sides of a fight. There was also the real possibility that groups of newsmen could have become hostages. I'm not sure a newsman gives up his citizenship and right to protection whenever our military goes into combat. Newsmen will respect police lines at the scene of a fire -- to prevent them from running into a burning building -- but, they no longer want to respect battle lines.

- When I said I would never dream of overruling the decision of a commander, I meant that once a plan is approved and the order is given to carry it out, I should not interpose myself in his tactical problem. The commanders had their hands full in subduing a well-equipped force and rescuing hundreds of our citizens. They had no way to accommodate 400-500 newsmen.

- We would like to find a way to include the media from the beginning of the operation so long as the security of the mission is maintained and the lives of our fighting men are not jeopardized. We can accept nothing less. The question is then, what will the media accept in order to be included. I would rather that the solutions come from the press itself.

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