

*From Colson*  
7-20-73  
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June 28, 1973

Gentlemen:

The way in which Mr. Dean introduced a series of exhibits into yesterday's Committee hearing has unfortunately created considerable confusion in the press and I suspect has misled the members of the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities. A terribly significant distinction in the various so-called "opponents lists" has been obscured.

I hope that you will take the occasion in questioning Mr. Dean today to insist that he make clear what the facts are with respect to these lists.

There was a broad general list maintained by Mr. George Bell (now deceased) of critics and supporters of the President. This list was primarily intended for the use of the social office and the personnel office in considering White House invitations and appointments. There is nothing particularly novel or sinister about the idea of maintaining such records. Frankly, I think it is quite appropriate for the President's staff not to want at a White House dinner, for example, someone who had signed an advertisement calling for the impeachment of the President or someone who had made a large contribution to help defeat the President in a political campaign.

Be that as it may, Mr. Dean has lumped together this rather simple cataloging of names with a project apparently conceived by him to "use the available federal machinery to screw our political enemies" (memo of August 16, 1971, Committee Exhibit No. 48). Mr. Dean has included in a mass of documents a list of 20 people identified as "opponents priority activity" (I believe it is Exhibit No. 49, although it is not entirely clear from the transcript. Based on the exchange between Mr. Dash and Mr. Dean, apparently the Committee was confused as to this document. See TR 2701).

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Mr. Dean suggests and most press accounts attribute the "opponents priority activity" list to me or my office. I do not know who prepared that document. I do know that I did not nor did anyone on my staff. I have checked with Mr. Bell's secretary and have determined it was not prepared by him.

By confusing the list of 20 names with Mr. Bell's overall list, Mr. Dean has very unfairly implicated Mr. Bell in something I suspect Mr. Bell was totally unaware of -- and, of course, Mr. Bell cannot defend himself, a fact Mr. Dean well knows.

Once again, by cleverly rearranging the facts to suit his own purpose Mr. Dean has deceived the Committee and the public; he has tried to shift the responsibility for his own conduct onto others. This has been a very consistent pattern over the past three days. However, the Committee has an opportunity today, at least with respect to this one issue, to help the public understand the truth. I, therefore, request that you ask Mr. Dean to make a more complete identification of these documents so as to make clear the distinction between Mr. Dean's project to "screw political enemies" and Mr. Bell's assignment of merely keeping track of friends and opponents. At the very least, I request that this letter be read into the record of the Committee proceedings at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

  
Charles W. Colson

Messrs. Fred Thompson, Esq.  
and Samuel Dash, Esq.  
Select Committee on Presidential  
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Washington, DC 20510

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cc: Honorable Sam J. Ervin  
Honorable Howard H. Baker  
Honorable Herman E. Talmadge  
Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Honorable Joseph M. Montoya  
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Honorable Lowell P. Weicker  
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