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25 January 1975

SUBJECT: Mitchell Livingston WerBell III (201-259910)

1. Mitchell Livingston WerBell, who appeared in recent press reports has for over a period of ten years been claiming to be a representative of the United States Government and of CIA. The facts do not support this contention.

2. CIA first learned of WerBell in July of 1959 when he contacted General Cabel indicating knowledge of Cuban and Dominican affairs. Mr. [redacted] of LA Division was put in contact with WerBell and considered using him as an FI asset. A POA was granted on 7 July 1959 for this purpose. By October 1959 it was apparent that he did not have the access to information as hoped and he apparently looked upon his association with CIA as a means of furthering his various business schemes. All contact was then severed.

3. From that time until the present Mr. WerBell has cropped up in a number of nefarious activities whereby he inferred he had CIA connections or support. He was reported to have been involved in arms sales to Nicaragua and Guatemala, in efforts to gain recognition by certain South American countries of the Cuban Government in Exile, and in an abortive scheme to invade the Republic of Haiti in 1966. He also turned up in Thailand where he contacted the COS purporting to be a counter-insurgency expert. In 1971 the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense queried the Agency re Mr. WerBell, asking if WerBell had a contractual agreement or association with the Agency, as WerBell was awaiting a hearing before a Department of Defense Examiner related to his participation in the abortive Haiti invasion. The Office of the General Counsel placed the matter in perspective. Subsequently, he contacted the Agency to request intercession on his behalf to have his security clearance reinstated which DoD revoked because of his Haitian caper. He was told this could not be done. In 1971 he again appeared in Thailand attempting to sell arms. In 1973 he was under investigation by U.S. Treasury Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and by the United States Customs Service for activities relating to possible mercenary activities in Abaco Island, Bahamas. In this connection WerBell contacted three ex-CIA employees, John P. Muldoon, Walter J. Mackem and Theodore Roussos in a scheme to involve them in the activities of an organization called the Friends of Abaco (FOA) which is advocating the secession of the island from the Commonwealth of Bahamas.

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All three individuals reported their involvement with the WerBell group and had sought guidance from the Agency. In May and June they were advised to break all ties with WerBell. On 27 June 1974 the FBI was formally apprised of WerBell's overtures for their collaboration in the effort to bring Abaco's secession. In September 1974 WerBell reportedly went to Greece to sell arms to the Greek Government. Most recently WerBell reportedly appeared before Senator Jackson's Sub-Committee investigating DEA and had taken the Fifth Amendment on the question of whether or not he had supplied arms to Robert Vesco.

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