1 April 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion with State Department Officials on the Nosenko Case

1. Mr. Helms and Mr. Murphy met with Ambassador Thompson, Mr. Thomas Hughes, Mr. Richard Davis and Mr. John Guthrie at the Department to convey to them our conclusions just arrived at that Nosenko is not a genuine defector but more probably an agent planted on us by the KGB. Mr. Helms described the basis for our belief and the means of arriving at it. Mr. Helms noted that we had discussed the Nosenko case with the Warren Commission because they had received a report from the FBI based on the FBI's interrogation of Nosenko which pertained to the Oswald case. The report made a strong case for the position that the Soviet Government had nothing whatsoever to do with Oswald's assassination of President Kennedy. The Commission was anxious to know our reaction and we informed them we were not sure of the man's bona fides and therefore could not underwrite the statements he had made.

2. Ambassador Thompson remarked that he had just heard from Isaac Don Levine and that the latter intended to write a book on the Oswald case in which he hoped to make the point that Oswald was mentally unbalanced and was trying to break up the Kennedy-Khrushchev relationship.

3. We also related the Krotkov case in the United Kingdom to the Nosenko case, explaining the way in which the Soviets could hope, through accusations that former Ambassador to Moscow Maurice DeJean was an agent, to "cover" the numerous leaks of sensitive information suffered by the French Government and reported to us by the defector Golitsyn.

4. We then described for State Department officials the manner in which Gribanov operates against the diplomatic colony. Mr. Helms went on to say that we had arrived at a point with Nosenko where we believed we had to use more energetic measures to arrive at the truth and determine his mission. After we tried this we would probably wish

to turn him back to the Soviets. At the point it was decided to return Subject to Soviet control, he would be served with an immigration warrant for deportation as an undesirable alien. Afterwards, he would be flown to Europe and allowed to return to Soviet custody. We would probably wish to accomplish this in Berlin where several such turn-backs have been made in the past and this has been accepted by the Soviets. Ambassador Thompson asked why we could not indict the man and try him for espionage. We explained that it would be difficult to prove this even if he were to give us a full confession since the only evidence would be his own word. Furthermore, we would be reluctant to become involved in the evitable publicity that a trial of this nature would cause. We are anxious to learn the truth but are not interested in a trial or punishment for Nosenko.

5. Ambassador Thompson then said that the only aspect of our planning which gave him pause was the idea of returning the man to Soviet custody. He felt that we would inevitably encounter criticism from the press if they speculated the turn-back was in exchange for the release of the three flyers. This the Government would very much wish to avoid. Mr. Murphy showed Ambassador Thompson the draft press statement we had prepared by which we hoped to make clear that this was not an exchange of any type but related solely to the fraudulent character of the Nosenko defection. This accompanied by additional newspaper publicity would serve to make clear the real reasons for Nosenko's return.

6. In a brief aside with Mr. Davis, the discussion of the letters came up and we had an inconclusive discussion of them. We agreed that the letter which was to be read by the wife on the Embassy premises should not be sent to the Embassy nor should the Embassy become involved in this. We also discussed the possibility of sending the other letter through regular mail channels to the wife's address. We did not discuss what the Embassy was to say if the wife called again and I feel I must go back to Mr. Davis on this question.

7. Mr. Hughes then asked if we were sure we had received all we could under the present circumstances. He was assured we had and this was explained in some

detail. We described the CE information received from Subject, noting how some of it was aimed quite clearly at covering leads provided by Golitsyn. At this point, Mr. Helms described for the State Department officials the history of our attempts to persuade the [redacted] to take vigorous action on these leads and their failure to do so indicating there are still active penetrations in the [redacted] intelligence services and elsewhere in the government.

8. The meeting ended with Ambassador Thompson suggesting he would like to brief the Secretary on the problem and also discuss it with the State Department legal advisor, Abram Chayes, and then he would be back in touch with us. He asked the other Department officers present not to discuss this case with other persons.

David E. Murphy
Chief, SR Division