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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 20, 1976

MR-7

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: PHILIP BUCHEN *P.*

SUBJECT: Evidence of U. S. Flyers  
Downed in 1950

On Thursday, August 18, I had a long telephone conversation with John Milanowski. He now is satisfied that the Federal Government has done all that is reasonably possible to check on the validity of information received by John Noble, a U. S. citizen formerly imprisoned by the Soviet authorities, that certain of the flyers were in fact imprisoned by the Soviet authorities.

I told him that I had thoroughly checked the records and that the information which Noble said was given to him by a fellow prisoner from Germany was not supported, even by the alleged informant.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Sent up with a memo from Phil Buchen

7/12/76


THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

July 7, 1976

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT 

SUBJECT: U. S. Navy Flyers Downed in 1950

Pursuant to your request of May 10, 1976, members of your staff have been reviewing the facts of the crash of a U.S. Navy PB4Y-2 over the Baltic Sea on April 8, 1950 and the possibility that any of the U. S. crew might have survived and might now be in Soviet hands.

The very best information we have is that no members of the crew survived. They were declared dead by the Department of Defense in 1951. In response to our formal approaches down through the years, the Soviet Government has steadfastly maintained that they picked up no survivors and that they are holding no U. S. military personnel in the Soviet Union.

On April 7, 1976, John Milanowski provided you with materials he had received from Mr. John N. Noble and a private detective named Theodore Grevers -- "The Fatman" -- suggesting the possibility that at least some of the PB4Y crew might be alive and imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Both Mr. Noble and Mr. Grevers have been active on this issue in recent years. Mr. Noble bases his position with regard to the U. S. flyers on information he acquired while he was imprisoned in the USSR from 1945-1955. Under the Freedom of Information Act, Noble and Grevers acquired former Top Secret documents on the PB4Y's mission and fate from the Department of Defense -- documents which they suggest substantiate their claim that the U. S. crew might still be alive. We have reviewed many of the documents in question, and there is no firm evidence that would seem to support the position taken by Mr. Noble and Mr. Grevers.

I reported the results of our review to you in a memorandum of June 10. Because there are unanswered questions in the written record however, Phil Buchen asked for a delay in submitting the memo to you in order to seek additional evidence from Defense and to confirm conclusively that no avenue had been left unexplored. We have worked with Phil to assure an exhaustive search of Defense records, in the hope of clarifying ambiguities in the information reviewed thus far. At the same time, Phil has been in touch with John Milanowski, who has expressed his satisfaction with the attention being given by the White House to this matter. We will forward our complete findings, together with a proposed letter for your signature to John Milanowski, as soon as our review of the documents is completed.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION  
July 7, 1976

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SUBJECT: U.S. Navy Flyers Downed in 1950

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*cc Phil Buchen*

MEMORANDUM  
OF CALL

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

YOU WERE CALLED BY T  YOU WERE VISITED BY \_\_\_\_\_

Eva

OF (Organization) \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CALL  PHONE NO. 2632  
CODE/EXT.

WILL CALL AGAIN  IS WAITING TO SEE YOU

RETURNED YOUR CALL  WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

MESSAGE \_\_\_\_\_

thinks he  
dictated to  
Shirley  
will call bus.

RECEIVED BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 6/28 TIME 3:10

STANDARD FORM 63  
REVISED AUGUST 1967  
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6

As of 6/28/76  
Mr. Bushen working  
on it and has been  
in touch with  
Mr. Milanowski HB L

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*6/19 memo Eva mor  
Buchen Home today*

Sara -

NSC is saying that there is nothing  
mor to June 10 memo ---

Tried to reach Eva at home  
since she was one who told me  
that Mr. Buchen was discussing it  
with NSC -- could you try her  
tomorrow if you have time. Thanks.

Trudy

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

9 A.M.

Bud McFarlane called - the President asked General Scowcroft about this matter again.

I explained Mr. Buchen still had problems with it and was talking to Milanowski --- NSC will take a copy of their June 10th package in today if we don't send in the whole story.

Called Mr. Buchen and he will call and discuss matter with Bud McFarlane.

GBF

7/2/76



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

6/21

Shirley Key says and Buchen told Milanowski that he would personally review the case (per Milanowski's request) and that he hasn't had a chance since he's been on the trip.

Shirley will call Milanowski and explain that Buchen does have complete file and as soon as he gets back will review it.

Sara

*called Mildred Leonard  
- who mentioned it to the  
Pres. that Mr. Milanowski  
wanted a call. - brought in up to date  
6/21 HB G*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 18, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: BRENT SCOWCROFT  
FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEB*  
SUBJECT: U.S. Navy Flyers Downed in 1950

The following notation was returned in the President's outbox today:

"John Milanowski, my former Administrative Assistant on Capitol Hill, former U.S. District Attorney, left me material awhile back on the missing U.S. plane crew from World War II.

He and a person named, Noble, I believe wanted to see Navy records on whether or not crew was picked up by Soviets.

Any information I can give him? He is calling me."

On June 10th you forwarded to this office a memorandum for the President on this subject. This memorandum was staffed to Phil Buchen for his comments and I understand that you and Phil have been discussing this matter.

Please coordinate action with Phil Buchen and inform us if the package should go forward as prepared on June 10.

cc: Dick Cheney  
Phil Buchen

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 18, 1976

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SUBJECT: U.S. Navy Flyers Downed in 1950

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cc: Dick Cheney  
Phil Buchen

Brent Sewerft

John Melnowski, my former  
Administrative assistant on Capital Hill,  
former U.S. Dist. Att., left me material  
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believe wanted to see Navy records on  
whether or not crew was picked up by  
Sovets.

Any information I can give him?  
He is calling me.

THE WHITE HOUSE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

WASHINGTON

LOG NO.:

Date: June 10, 1976

Time:

FOR ACTION:

cc (for information):

Phil Buchen

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date: Soon as Possible Please

Time:

SUBJECT:

Brent Scowcroft memo 6/10/76 re U.S.  
Navy Flyers Downed in 1950 --

ACTION REQUESTED:

For Necessary Action

For Your Recommendations

Prepare Agenda and Brief

Draft Reply

For Your Comments

Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

PLEASE RETURN ENTIRE PACKAGE -  
ORIGINAL ATTACHMENTS WITH PACKAGE -  
Thank you.

*Mr Buchen & Brent Scowcroft are  
discussing 6/15 per Eva*

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

K. R. COLE, JR.  
For the President

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ACTION

June 10, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT *WH for*

SUBJECT: U.S. Navy Flyers Downed in 1950

You recently requested (Tab A) the facts on the crash of a U.S. Navy PB4Y-2 over the Baltic Sea on April 8, 1950, including the possibility that any of the U.S. crew might have survived and might now be in Soviet hands.

All the information we have to date indicates that no members of the crew survived. They were declared dead by the Department of Defense in 1951. In response to our formal approaches down through the years, the Soviet Government has steadfastly maintained that they picked up no survivors and that they are holding no U.S. military personnel in the Soviet Union.

Background

On April 7, 1976, John Milanowski provided you with materials he has received from Mr. John H. Noble and a private detective named Theodore Grevers -- "The Fatman" -- suggesting the possibility that at least some of the PB4Y crew might be alive and imprisoned in the Soviet Union. Mr. Noble and Mr. Grevers have been active on this issue in recent years. Mr. Noble bases his position with regard to the U.S. flyers on information he acquired while he was imprisoned in the USSR from 1945-1955. Under the Freedom of Information Act, Noble and Grevers acquired former Top Secret documents on the PB4Y's mission and fate from the Department of Defense -- documents which they suggest substantiate their claim that the U.S. crew might still be alive. We have reviewed all of the documents in question, and there is no fresh evidence that seems to support the position taken by Mr. Noble and Mr. Grevers.

The PB4Y was on an electronic intelligence mission over the Baltic when it was shot down by Soviet aircraft in 1950. The Soviets at the time informed us in a letter of protest that they had shot down a U. S. flying fortress which was over Soviet territory.

The Navy's Board of Inquiry on the loss of the aircraft produced evidence which indicated that the plane had gone down in the Baltic. Two of the plane's life rafts were found subsequent to the loss of the aircraft, and the aircraft's 300 pound nose landing gear was picked up in the nets of a Baltic fisherman. There was no trace of any survivors.

In 1950 in response to an official diplomatic note, the Soviet Government stated that no U. S. personnel had been picked up. In the years which followed, the United States Government sought to establish more precisely whether or not any members of the crew could possibly be in the Soviet Union. In 1956 the State Department requested the names of any U. S. military personnel detained in the USSR since 1949; and in our formal note, we included the ten names of the PB4Y crew. In August 1956, the Soviet Government replied that no U. S. citizens either from the U. S. Air Force or the U. S. Navy were on the territory of the Soviet Union and no U. S. personnel were being detained by the USSR.

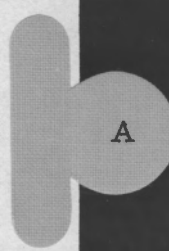
In 1973 in response to a request from Mr. Grevers, the State Department again approached the Soviet Government on this subject asking for any information on the fate or whereabouts of the crew, and the Department of State was again advised that there are no U. S. personnel on Soviet territory. In 1975 in response to a letter from the Church Committee, State again raised this with the Soviets, again with the same response.

Based on the information we have reviewed, there seems to be little likelihood that, in fact, any of the U. S. crew survived.

The letter for your signature to John Milanowski at Tab B would inform him that our very best information would indicate there are no survivors.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter at Tab B.



A



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

5/10/76

Brent Swerdt

John Melanowski gave me this. He had a 5 hour interview with John Noble & is impressed by him.

The so-called detective is not reliable so discount him.

John M. tells me that John Noble got from the Navy, under the Freedom of Information Act, documents that indicate the Navy aircraft crew could have survived & been picked up by the Soviets.

Get me all the facts.



B



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Dear John:

A month ago, you were good enough to provide me with the April 7 letter you had received from Mr. Theo Grevers on the subject of the U. S. Navy fliers who were lost over the Baltic Sea in 1950.

My staff has looked carefully into the facts, and the very best information we have from both defense and diplomatic channels would seem to confirm that there are no survivors of the crash, that no members of the crew are being detained in the Soviet Union.

While I had hoped there might be more positive results to report, I do want you to know these are the facts as we have them. We will be alert to even a hint of new information, but I cannot be encouraging.

With best personal regards,

Mr. John P. Milanowski  
Attorney & Counsellor at Law  
Milanowski & Milanowski  
Suite 601  
People's Building  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502