

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARCH 31, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary
-----THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
 THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
 THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
 THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
 THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
 THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR
 TRADE NEGOTIATIONS
 THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT
 AND BUDGET
 ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR
 ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
 ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR
 NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COUNCIL ON
 INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY

Subject: Task Force on Questionable Corporate Payments Abroad

This is to advise you of my decision to appoint you to a Cabinet-level Task Force which I am establishing to examine the policy aspects of recent disclosures of questionable payments to foreign agents and officials by U.S. companies in conjunction with their overseas business operations. The Task Force will be chaired by Secretary Richardson and will report to me through the Economic Policy Board and National Security Council. Status reports on the efforts of the Task Force should be presented to me from time to time, and a final report is due prior to the close of the current calendar year.

Although the Federal Government is currently taking a number of international and domestic steps in an attempt to deal with this problem, I believe that a coordinated program to review these efforts and to explore additional avenues should be undertaken in the interest of ethical conduct in the international marketplace and the continued vitality of our free enterprise system.

The full dimensions of this problem are not yet known but it is clear that a substantial number of U.S. corporations have been involved in questionable payments to foreign officials, political organizations or business agents. The possibility exists that more can be done by our government. There would also appear to be some interest in guidance as to what standards should be applied to the foreign sales activities of the overwhelming majority of American businessmen who are deeply concerned about the propriety of their business operations.

The Task Force should explore all aspects of this problem and seek to obtain the views of the broadest base of interested groups and individuals. While the problems are complex and do not lend themselves to simple solutions, I am confident that your labors will contribute to a better international and domestic climate in which American business continues to play a vital and respected role.

GERALD R. FORD

#