MEMORANDUM FOR MR. MURPHY:

Attached is an excerpt from the Frank Edwards broadcast last Friday night over 200 odd NBS stations. The excerpt covers the views of Colonel Ralph Powers, a crack wartime counter espionage officer, in opposition to the Wood-McCarren Anti-Subversion Bill. Like Paul Jansen, Ralph Powers is an old and close wartime friend of mine. To use his own words, we "soldered together on three continents". He is also Chairman of the National Police Committee of the National Counter Intelligence Corps Association.

I arranged for this broadcast and also spent a lot of time discussing the bill with Powers and furnishing him material on it. Like all competent counter intelligence people that I have discussed the matter with, Powers, after he had studied the bill, was strongly opposed to it on counter intelligence and security grounds.

Powers was one of the outstanding counter intelligence officers of World War II, serving as Mediterranean Theatre Chief of the Counter Intelligence Corps, and later as Counter Intelligence Corp Chief in Austria after the end of the war. He, therefore, had direct contact not only with Nazi and Fascist espionage and subversion, but also with the Russian Communist variety (in Austria).

(Initialled) S.J.S.

S.J.S.
September 22, 1950

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Excerpt from 10:00 P.M., Friday, September 22, 1950, Broadcast of Frank Edwards (APF), ABC Commentator, containing views of Colonel Ralph Powers, top-flight wartime counter espionage officer, on Wood-McCarran Anti-Communist Bill (H.R. 9400).

The hottest item on Capitol Hill today was the argument pro and con about the piece of legislation which was supposed to enable this country to trap subversives. It was a pretty shoddy piece of law making and contained little to recommend it, except the title, "Communist Control". Many a legislator, who could generally be depended upon for sane consideration, was swept along by the hysteria and voted for this dubious device. Only a handful of the men and women on Capitol Hill refused to be stampeded and stood by their convictions. They risked their political careers to vote against an obvious and deceptive bill as Congress has passed in years. This small group stood shoulder to shoulder for the final count, defending the Constitutional rights of all Americans.

The President promptly vetoed the so-called Communist control bill, as was expected, not because he did not want to control Communists, but because he was not willing to jeopardize basic American rights and principles of all Americans when the job could be done against the Communists far better by expanding Constitutional methods.

Our finest professional intelligence men had prepared two bills which were virtually identical. One was S.4061, which was introduced by nine Senators. The other was House resolution 9500, introduced by Representative Geller of the House Judiciary Committee. These bills would provide adequate workable controls to supplement the existing anti-subversive legislation. Those bills were the work of men whose lives have been devoted to the job of outwitting and smashing...
subversive activities. Those men are interested in results, not politics and headlines. They opposed this so-called Communist control bill.

Why do they oppose it? Well, let's ask one of them. Let's ask a man who is well qualified to answer our question, Colonel Ralph Powers. Colonel Powers was in G-2 in the early days of the last war, dealing with espionage agents in this country. In 1942, he went to North Africa to set up counter-espionage outfits. His agents there tracked down hundreds of enemy agents. In 1944, Colonel Powers was made Chief of the Counter-Intelligence Corps for the Mediterranean theatre. Under his guidance, our intelligence men caught more than a thousand enemy espionage agents in various categories. As Chief of the Counter-Intelligence Corps in Austria, Colonel Powers continued his brilliant career of outwitting and stamping out subversives, well known in many countries he is one of our foremost authorities on counter-espionage. Here to give you his own opinion of the objections to this so-called Communist control bill, is one of America's top intelligence authorities, Colonel Ralph Powers.

POWERS:

I am strongly opposed to any legislation providing for registration of Communists, members of Communist fronts, or any other subversives. In my opinion, such measures would hurt, rather than help, the internal security of the United States, and I sincerely believe they would actually strengthen the Communist party in this country, by lumping its members in with many hundreds of thousands of sincere, though misguided and gullible people, as well as many honest and loyal liberals.

A proposal to require registration is an amateurish, naive and impractical effort in the field of counter-espionage and internal security, which may strike the public fancy but which will not catch spies. Any prosecution under such law would necessarily compromise confidential sources of information and hamper future investigative work. Moreover, it smacks of totalitarian procedures which are wholly out of place in our tradition of freedom and would reduce the effectiveness of our great anti-Communist weapon, a demonstration of genuine democracy at work.

By close observation of real Communists here and in several other countries leads me inescapably to the position that no member of the hard core of that diabolical group would have his convictions repealed by any act of Congress. They will persist in their ungodly practices underground or in the open.
Thank you, Colonel Ralph Powers.

Today, President Truman vetoed this dangerous and intemperate...intemperate piece of legislation. The House promptly overrode the veto by 286 to 49. At this moment, opponents of the legislation are giving at length their arguments for support of the Presidential veto in the Senate, but Senate leaders feel that the talkathon will be over in time for the veto to be overridden before the scheduled adjournment of Congress tomorrow. Majority leader Scott Lucas says he's ready to hold the Senate in round-the-clock session if that's necessary to get a vote. The threat of a filibuster was first raised by Senator William Langer, the New York...the...rather the North Dakota Republican said that he would try to block action until adjournment time if he could get enough help, but the necessary support failed to come through. So, Republican Senator Langer says that he expects to speak only about an hour in supporting the President's veto.