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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

MR 00-20, # 12;
[1st page only was
previously sanitized]

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20 October 1975

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Forwarded herewith is the report submitted to me by Mr. S. D. Breckinridge of my staff after he reviewed the report on the subject of assassinations prepared by the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. I directed him to give this information to me alone, and I am submitting it herewith to you alone, with copies to no one else.

I know you are aware of and share my view that the subject of assassination attempts which may have been made in the past by this Government and this Agency should not be discussed in public. Your policy and position against such activity are clear. In addition, this Agency in 1972 and 1973 issued specific internal directives that CIA would not conduct, stimulate or support any such activity. This being clear, I believe that any exposure of events of the past on this subject could only do grievous damage to our country. Any countries named in the discussion would be particularly affected, but the impact would extend to others who might be concerned about such matters. Such a discussion would also be used by countries and groups hostile to the United States in an extensive campaign designed to do maximum damage to our country's reputation and foreign relations by repetition, exaggeration, and extrapolation of any such report. The fact that the subject has already been expostulated in the press and by unofficial spokesmen does not reduce the damage from an additional formal report by a committee given every possible access to official records and witnesses. The difference between informal comment on this subject and official confirmation would add immeasurably to the damage it would do to our country. I thus recommend most strongly that

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REF: CRFP: Richard Cheney Files, Intel series, b. 7, f. 1 "Rpt on CIA Assassination Plots (2)."

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you forward these views on my behalf to the Senate Select Committee, adding them to whatever may be your own, and seek its decision to forgo this action so destructive to our country, and of course incidentally to this Agency and its important intelligence mission.

Three other features are clear from the attached report:

a. The report clearly contains the names of a number of individuals with allegations or conclusions as to their involvement in such activities. I submit that naming such individuals in such a report exposes them not only to unfair and unwarranted public attention but to the danger of physical reprisal. As is clear from the attached report, this cannot be solved by merely omitting a specific name when the identification can be ascertained by careful analysis of the surrounding facts and further investigation based on the information provided, especially by a hostile political force or intelligence service. Publication of this report thus threatens the lives and the livelihood of a number of officers of this Agency, and individuals associated with it, for having performed what was conceived as their duty in years past along lines which we now find repugnant. Ex post facto punishment is prohibited in law. I believe it should be prohibited in this situation.

b. The attached report indicates that there are still ambiguities in the record as to the authorization and authority of actions which may have taken place in the past, due to a lack of records or the death or failing memory of participants. Thus, instead of clarifying the charges and countercharges which have appeared in public on this subject, it appears that the report will only provide new ammunition for them and ensure a continuation and intensification of public debate and recriminations on this subject.

c. The high degree of publicity which would accompany any such publication, particularly any detailing of the events of the past, will have a major impact around the world in foreign belief in the will and ability of the United States to maintain secrets. Any secret collaboration considered with the United

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States for what might appear to be presently useful and proper reasons would be evaluated by foreigners and foreign governments against the prospect that the United States would unilaterally repudiate such an understanding and publish in the future what it asks to keep secret today. This is already a major problem for our intelligence operations abroad; they would be further burdened by publication of this report with its ensuing publicity. It is clear that the same conclusion would be applicable to many of our foreign political, economic and military relationships.

✓✓ For these reasons, Mr. President, I urge in the strongest terms possible that this report not be published. I believe the Senate Select Committee could perform its duty fully by pointing out the uncertain quality of the record on the subject, but the certainty of its view, which I know you share, that no such activity should take place in the future. Recommendations for legislation or regulation on this subject could make a positive contribution to ensuring against any such activity in the future. Reports and recriminations with respect to the past can only be destructive to our country.

Respectfully,

W. E. Colby
W. E. Colby
Director

Attachment

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HR 00.29. #128

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JFK Assass. Rec. Collection Act of 1992

JFK 1781000410117
NARA date 5/24/00 By KBH

INSPECTOR GENERAL
75-3727

Executive Registry

20 OCT 1975

75-11933

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : SSC Draft Report on Assassination

1. On 16 and 17 October I reviewed the SSC draft report on assassination. My review was for the express purpose of addressing the question of such security revelations as there were; and that required correction if the report is to be considered for publication. Because of this my review was somewhat more detailed and technical than the review by the representatives of the Department of State and Defense. I did, however, also reach more general conclusions.
2. Attached is a summary of the problems raised by the disclosures by the draft report of the identities of persons associated with the various operations. The attachment also addresses the report's disclosure of intelligence methods. I have more detailed rough notes that I am prepared to use in discussions with the SSC Staff members on these technical questions about the report; they are further reinforced by extensive pencil notations made on the face of the draft report provided for my review, but which remains with the SSC Staff. If my reservations are taken into account -- some of them were conveyed orally in summary fashion late Friday afternoon -- some sections will require extensive revision. Mr. Schwarz stated that the SSC plans to act on the report this week; the required changes are so extensive that it is doubtful that they can be made within the stated time frame.
3. The editorial treatment in the report, and the selected format, has resulted in anything but a crisp paper. We were told that the SSC experienced difficulty in reaching conclusions on some facts and simply decided "to let the facts speak for themselves." There is a great deal of on-one-hand-and-on-the-other-hand discussion that leaves something for everyone; it may reflect disagreement within the Committee, and constitutes a poor compromise, making the report repetitious and discursive. It is inconsistent in treatment of information, shifting from application of strict tests of proof in some instances (what did the White House know and approve) to generalized interpretation (what was the Agency's direct

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involvement). The resulting presentation is incongruous on occasion -- an effort seems to have been made to reinforce considerations absolving the White House of responsibility for the events leading to the deaths of Diem and Trujillo and planning against Castro, while direct evidence to the contrary is rationalized into an apparent implication of Agency involvement in the death of Schneider.

4. Were there more time to critique the report, with a copy in hand, a more thorough and balanced treatment might be provided. Regardless of critiques, the report will leave the reader with one fundamental conclusion. The degree of detailed treatment, showing high-level approval of courses of action that led to the death of foreign leaders, can only be injurious to the international status of the United States. The fuzzy picture of executive responsibility, as presented by the draft report, will be clarified by our foes and reported stridently to an obvious end.

5. Beyond the grave damage that publication of the report will do to the international position of the United States, consideration must be given lesser aspects of the problem. If CIA were to survive the atmosphere created by the report, it would experience new difficulties in operating abroad, as would any successor organization. Foreign agents, who must trust the Agency to protect their lives, would -- as they reportedly are doing already -- demonstrate a new reluctance to associate themselves with the American intelligence services. Foreign services, which now play a key role in the American foreign intelligence effort, would have to review the extent of their relationship with the intelligence services of a nation that cannot -- or will not -- protect its own secrets and, by extension, theirs.

6. The sections of the draft report entitled Findings and Conclusions and Recommendations contain the conclusions that the United States government, and its instruments, have been engaged in planning assassinations, stating the Committee's opposition to such activity, and recommending legislation against such activity. Those sections, while providing the stark conclusions as noted, do not include the extensive detail of the preceding several hundred pages, with its many disclosures. Its publication would be harmful in general, but would tend to reduce the basis for succeeding criticism, thereby reducing the extent of the damage. Damage there will be, but limiting publication to the sections on Findings and Conclusions and Recommendations may provide a basis for discussion with the Select Committee.

S. D. Breckinridge
S. D. Breckinridge

Attachment:
As Stated

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Security Revelations in SSC Draft Report on Assassination

1. In its present form the draft report makes extensive revelations of the names of individuals involved in the various operations. These must be reviewed for deletion prior to consideration of further treatment of the report. From this point of view, alone, it remains a highly classified document.

2. The report specifically names a number of individuals: Agency employees, employees of other government departments or agencies, cooperating individuals--both foreign and American--and agents. It so describes others, whose names are concealed, that their identification is readily ascertainable. It is inevitable, in such detailed review of the various events, that a good deal is reviewed about operational staff planning, and operational patterns and techniques. These are treated below.

Identification of Individuals

Recording of Names

The draft makes extensive use of the true names of employees, agents, and cooperating individuals who were involved.

Those Now Deceased

The deaths of such persons as senior government officials and of Allen Dulles, C. P. Cabell, Desmond Fitzgerald, Sheffield Edwards, Tracy Barnes, and Salvatore Giancana may obviate the need to protect their names in association with the events treated in the draft report, either from personal retaliation or from harassment by unstable persons to whose attention they are brought by the publicity. The purpose of publication in any event is unclear.

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Those Still Living

The list of names in the report of those still living, who had some role in the various activities, is long. The names picked out in the review of the draft are below:

- (1) James O'Connell
- (2) Robert Maheu
- (3) John Roselli
- (4) Santos Trafficante
- (5) (FNU) Maceo
- (6) Tony Varona
- (7) Juan Orta
- (8) J. C. King
- (9) William Harvey
- (10) Samuel Halpern
- (11) Bronson Tweedy
- (12) Sidney Gottlieb
- (13) [REDACTED]
- (14) Edward Gunn
- (15) (FNU) Gomez (otherwise unidentified in text)
- (16) Henry Dearborn
- (17) John Barfield
- (18) [REDACTED]
- (19) Alonzo Berry
- (20) Colonel Wimert
- (21) David Phillips
- (22) Justin O'Donnell
- (23) Glenn Fields
- (24) Lou Conein
- (25) John Richardson
- (26) David R. Smith

This list omits persons not directly involved other than in the line of command, from the level of Deputy Director up. Two division chiefs are listed--J. C. King and Bronson Tweedy--and might, by reason of their seniority, be omitted from the list of those whose names should be deleted. The list, otherwise, is a mix of Agency employees, cooperating individuals, and agents. The comments below first treat the question of Agency employees.

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Agency Employees

The day-to-day record of events is subject to relatively direct reconstruction, and the draft opts for detailed recitation. In some instances, the format calls for treatment of the same subject matter from more than one point of view. Relying on this approach, there has been extensive recording of the true names of individuals. This is so extensive in some sections of the report that major editorial revision will be required to protect those entitled to it.

Those employees still living--either still active or retired--require protection from whatever repercussions that might flow from official connection with the reported events. They are entitled to this both in traditional terms of protection of employees and agents in their work, and in terms of separating them from such unpredictable incidents as may flow from publication.

Other U. S. Employees

Publication of the names of Henry Dearborn, John Barfield (Department of State) in connection with the Trujillo affair should be omitted (Section E). Mention of Colonel Wimert (Section F) in connection with the Schneider affair also should be accorded the same treatment.

Cooperating Individuals

Robert Maheu, whatever publicity he has been given, is entitled to protection from official confirmation of the press stories. Not only is he entitled to protection from direct association in the Castro operation, he is entitled to protection from incidental revelation of his involvement in other unrelated activities (The report cites his involvement in an Onassis-Niarchos contest, on which he reported to the government, and in making a motion picture to discredit a foreign leader).

The Syndicate members through whom Maheu worked pose a somewhat different problem, but the same central issue remains. We cannot divine how publicity would impact on their future. Giancana is dead, presumably as a result of unrelated events, but how publicity would affect Trafficante

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and Maceo is debatable. Both are entitled to this protection. Roselli, now engaged in deportation proceedings, may wish the publicity to strengthen a claim to special consideration, but he nevertheless is entitled to the same protection that the others are.

Great care is taken to conceal the identity of an action asset inside Cuba (Section D.I., pp 18-19), but his true name appears at page 21. He is believed to still be alive, and is entitled to protection.

The full name of Tony Varona appears often. (Section D.I. p 19, ff). He is entitled to protection.

One man named in the draft, but unknown to this reviewer, (FNU) Gomez (Section E, p 5), should be checked for identification. He would seem entitled to protection, in the context that he is mentioned.

The name of Alonzo Berry is included (Section E, pp 16-22, p. 31). Although he has received publicity in the past, he is entitled to protection from official confirmation of his role in the Trujillo affair.

Section F. pp 30-42. The listing by name of a number of Chilean officers, some of whom have been tried in Chile for their role in plotting, would reveal additionally contacts with a foreign power. This might open them to new charges at some time in the future.

Reference Inaccurately Conveying
Impression of Operational Involvement
of American Citizen

D.I. pp 28-29. In reporting the various schemes conceived at working levels in CIA to infect a diving suit, the impression is conveyed that Attorney James Donovan might be aware of what was being discussed; while there is no evidence that he was. His being mentioned in true name, in this context, is subject to correction.

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Uninvolved Bystanders

Recitation of the Las Vegas bugging incident is such as to expose both Dan Rowan and the person associated with him in the incident. Official publication would give the press a free run at this unnecessary detail in a private life. (Section D. I. pp 13-17).

Identification by Description

In some instances, where the actual name is not recorded, the description is such that the identification can be made readily by knowledgeable persons.

Section D.I. p. 4. The summary of an offer by a Cuban pilot in July 1960, to cause an accident that would kill senior Cuban officials, makes his identification a relatively simple thing for the Cuban DGI.

Section D.I. pp 29-34. The description of AMLASH/I is such that his identity is fairly simple. Were there any doubt, the citing of specific dates on which he was met outside Cuba (pp 31, 33, 34 and 35) would make it very clear who he is. He is now in prison in Cuba and is entitled to this protection.

Section E. Even if the name of COS Ciudad Trujillo is omitted, the title is still revealing to knowledgeable persons. More general reference to cables to and from the "Station" would generalize the identity, assuming that any reference is necessary.

Section F. p 27. The COS is cited but not named. It is preferable that reference be to the "Station" and not to him as an individual.

Section F. pp 30-42. In conjunction with a listing of Chilean officers by name (supra), the additional identification of a "Lieutenant Colonel," a "Navy Captain," and an "Air Force General," presumably not previously identified, could lead to further inquiry in Chile. General reference to "Chilean military figures" should suffice, if any treatment is necessary.

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Section G. The use of the pseudonym "Hedgman" for the [redacted] in Leopoldville/Kinshasa would be illusory if it is intended to conceal his identity. Those knowledgeable would soon penetrate the device. Some more general reference to the CIA Station is a minimum requirement.

Section G. p 13. The direct citation of Station use of a Congolese security man who was in liaison with the CIA Station would permit his ready identification.

Cryptonyms

The draft report employs cryptonyms of agents and operations that probably should not be contested. New digraphs may be necessary in the Latin American Division (e.g., AMLASH, JMWAVE), but these probably cannot be avoided. Preferably they should not be used, but the Rockefeller Report set a precedent that might as well be followed.

Section F. p 21. Reference to the initials "CAS" is no more than a designation employed by other government agencies in referring to CIA in certain communications. It should be replaced by the "CIA" initials, if used at all.

Sources and Methods

It is impossible to treat the entire subject of these various operations, recording day-to-day activities in such detail, without revealing a great deal about patterns of thought and activity that will reveal a great deal to foreign intelligence analysts about CIA techniques, attitudes and modus operandi. The draft report is highly revealing, in its extensive detail. While it would be misleading in some respects, it nevertheless reveals a great deal about staff planning at lower levels (prior to elevating the results, if ever, for senior review), methods for approaching potential agents (and considerations in how to try to bring them under control and direct them), use of cut-outs, etc. Some specific revelations are noted below:

Section D.I. pp 22-28. In describing Harvey's past and other roles, interesting bits of information *and* revealed to the knowledgeable analyst. Harvey's role with *the* Berlin tunnel is cited. Description of his later division-- [REDACTED] --could present an interesting organizational concept for the analyst. The recruitment of a foreign agent for his criminal talents, by a named Agency employee working for Harvey (according to the draft report), would be read by foreign analysts for what it was, a man to [REDACTED]. The speculation in the draft report doesn't seem to support a rationale for including these bits of information.

Section D.I. pp 29-34. It is noted above that AMLASH could be identified by the pattern of his foreign meetings. It also highlights the ability of the Agency to follow the coming-and-going of foreign intelligence targets, an item that would attract the attention of foreign CI analysts.

Section D.I. p 38. Reference to a meeting in Madrid between AMLASH and another Agency operational contact, arranged by the Agency without the knowledge of either participant, is a technique that should not be publicized.

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