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OLC # 78-2873

24 July 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Meeting with HSCA on Mexican Interviews

1. Niles Gooding, George Joannides, Rodger Gabrielson, Bill Sturbitts, Marty Hawkins and Norbert Shepanek met with Messrs. Blakey and Cornwell at 0730 Saturday morning. The purpose was to discuss activity in Mexico City planned by HSCA.

2. As usual, it is difficult to plan how to approach questions as limited information is provided by the HSCA people. They had told us of their interest in ten persons in Mexico City. A quick check of Agency records had broken them out into separate groups and in the discussion with the HSCA representatives, one of these groups was subject to yet further distinctions.

3. The first group consisted of the following:

a. Calvillo - An unwitting co-optee, it had been agreed previously that Calvillo would not be asked about the activity he engaged in that, unknown to him, was at CIA initiative.

b. [redacted] - A former contract agent of CIA. He is a former employee--as distinguished from "agent" in the full sense of the word--and could be interviewed as a former employee.

c. Two men by the names of Palomares and Flores, neither of whom has had an operational association with the Agency.

4. The second group is more complex, consisting of persons in whom the HSCA would be interested because of their private activities without reference to Agency connections, which all of them had. HSCA has spoken to other persons in Mexico City, and had independent information about them of interest to their investigation; they

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(HSCA) felt they could simply approach them directly without reference to any Agency association. They are as follows:

a. The two who worked for CIA, LIONION and [redacted] operated photographic surveillance posts. It was agreed that arrangements would be made whereby they could be interviewed by an electronic means, in adjoining but separated rooms. One of them may not be available as he may be in Spain.

b. Two persons who reside in Mexico City, who formerly were employees in the Cuban Embassy, [redacted] [redacted] These would be interviewed as HSCA had done with other former employees of the Cuban Embassy, to ascertain what, if anything, came to their attention about Cuban attitudes towards and reaction to the assassination of President Kennedy, etc. It so happens, both were penetrations of the Cuban Embassy. Again, HSCA people took the position they would not mention any possible Agency connection or activity. They declined to have these persons interviewed under the same arrangements that would be used with two support agents, whose only interest is that they worked for CIA.

c. Two U.S. citizens, Mrs. June Cobb Sharp (believed to be in Mexico City) and a Mr. Wichtrich. Both are private citizens who are reported to have information of interest to the HSCA, in their private capacity. HSCA proposes to interview these persons just as they did the two penetration agents, without any mention of CIA.


5. In essence, we have an anomaly, whereby we have arranged to have support agents (whose only interest to HSCA is their work for the Agency) interviewed by telephonic equipment. Two agents whose nature is ordinarily even more sensitive (penetration agents) are being interviewed directly because they worked in a hostile diplomatic installation (and not because they worked for CIA) with no reference to be made to their association

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with CIA (HSCA declining to include them in the arrangement for the first two agents above). And two U.S. citizens whose work with CIA is of no interest to HSCA (although the reasons for interviewing them were not revealed to us) will be interviewed without reference to their CIA connection. In the eyes of HSCA, while they recognize a proprietary relationship on the part of CIA with the two support agents (operated photographic surveillance posts), they do not recognize such a relationship with the others, as HSCA would have interviewed them anyway for unrelated reasons (i.e., unrelated to CIA connections).

6. While HSCA has had to postpone their trip until around 7 August (the Mexican Government requested a delay), the basic problem remains. There is more time to get some feel for what is involved, but in essence, it is the position of HSCA that since they would have interviewed the four persons without reference to a CIA connection) they will do so anyway, but have solemnly undertaken to not raise any question about CIA connections or activities.



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Distribution:

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- 1 - Bill Sturbitts/LA Division
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