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OLC CHRONO

OLC 78-2035/1

5 June 1978

HSCA

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Mr. Blakey

1. I met with Mr. Blakey this morning shortly after 7:30 a.m. We met together with Rodger Gabrielson until we went to a meeting with DDCI Carlucci at 8:45 a.m., returning for another 10 minutes or so following the meeting with Carlucci. This memorandum records the highlights of discussions before and after Blakey met with Carlucci, which is the subject of a separate memorandum.

2. I started by saying that the problem that was pending is one of principle in the protection of intelligence sources and methods. We did not feel it appropriate to have clandestine agents interviewed. We thought we had made this clear to Gary Cornwell before he went to Mexico. I reviewed our conversation with Cornwell in which he had mentioned agents and non-official cover officials, the latter of which had been available to HSCA under special arrangements. I said that as a result of Cornwell having raised that point, we felt we had made it completely clear that the HSCA would interview no agents and that we could not help in this. We had a general discussion about how the word "agent" is used technically, and how it had changed over the years. I made the distinction between staff employees and other categories of persons, noting that we do not refer to CIA staff employees as agents.

3. We talked about the interview of a former agent in [redacted] I attributed the failure of the HSCA to notify us of this to Dan Hardway's failure to understand what he had when he reviewed the file. I said that we understood their interest in the man as a right-wing Cuban terrorist, but explained our sensitivity because of our past use of him in [redacted] I said that we had been told that the man had not told the HSCA investigators anything.

4. Blakey argued the HSCA rationale for looking at the Mexico City Station. He said that the HSCA charter included investigation into how the Station was run. I opined that he would have difficulty judging the Station. Its mission was to operate against the Cuban and Soviets. Its surveillance program was primarily to collect operational information, i.e., leads to persons who might have access, and to identify persons possibly working

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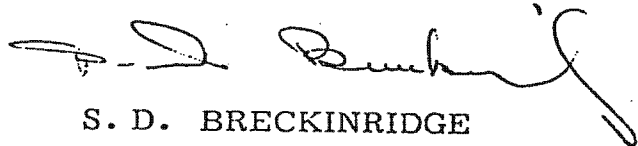
against us. This obviously did not include looking for potential presidential assassins. Yet we did identify an American named Lee Oswald, in touch with the Cubans and Soviets, which was reported routinely to Washington at the time. The remarkable thing is that he was identified at all, and that there was as much information to report as there was. A lot of Americans visit Mexico without official passports and go unnoticed. So his very identification is noteworthy. But as far as judging the Station is concerned, HSCA is in no position to judge how it fared in its operations against the Soviets and Cubans, which is the only basis for judging the Station. This was clearly outside the HSCA charter, and it simply is in no position to make a judgment.

5. Blakey argued that the agreements granted him access to the agents and that we were protected in the provisions of use of information. I stated that our past experience with other committees on eventual use had not been all that good. He said we were not standing by our commitment to him; I replied that this cut both ways, to which he said that the conversation was getting out of hand and changed the subject.

6. When we returned from the meeting with Carlucci, Blakey said that he thought his request was reasonable. I said that he had reviewed both past and present employees at Mexico City Station, as well as reviewing the files. The man he wants to interview is essentially a mechanic and was really unimportant to him, and I doubted that he had anything to add to what he knew.

7. He observed that our communications with Mexico City are better than his and asked if we would inform the Station to tell Cornwell about the outcome of this meeting. I asked if he wanted us to tell Cornwell to prepare questions to be given to the agent. Blakey replied that he did not at this time, and to tell Cornwell that they can discuss the matter further after Cornwell returned to Washington.

8. Blakey had me arrange a meeting on Thursday with Bill Sturbitts to try and run a "problem" through the DDO files. He also said he wanted to read the Hart report on Thursday to which I replied I would be in touch with him about this after its review has been completed.

  
S. D. BRECKINRIDGE

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