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The United States Senate

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Colby
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Report of Proceedings

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Hearing held before

Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations
with Respect to Intelligence Activities

Record Number 157-10011-10024

COMMITTEE HEARING

SSCI Box 239, Folder 14

Wednesday, May 21, 1975

Washington, D. C.

(Stenotype Tape and Waste turned over
to the Committee for destruction)

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1 the first man contacted by Mr. Maheu, worked through a
2 Cuban exile leader. And he offered -- and he said that he
3 could do something of this nature provided he got some funds
4 and the assistance. And he was supported in this regard.
5 And I think again we have some doubts as to the accuracy of
6 his reporting.

7 Mr. Schwarz. In November 1961 did Mr. Bissell instruct
8 a William Harvey to take charge of the gambling syndicate
9 operation designed to kill Fidel Castro? Page 3 of Mr. Greer's
10 report, which is at the beginning of your report.

11 Mr. Colby. I believe so, yes.

12 Yes. That is what our evidence says, the summary
13 sais, "of the evidence available". And this is the evidence
14 available in 1963. And there have been some minor changes in
15 some of the details of this summary, very minor changes.
16 But the essence of this report is still roughly accurate, I
17 believe.

18 Mr. Schwarz. Mr. Harvey -- was Mr. Harvey the man that
19 had hired an agent in order to ?

20 Mr. Colby. Mr. Harvey was the head of Staff D, Staff D
21 of the Operations directorate, ~~was responsible for communica-~~
22 ~~tions intelligence work on the secret level. A substantial~~
23 ~~portion of this staff's work involves attempts to penetrate~~
24 ~~embassies, particularly abroad -- or totally abroad, I don't~~
25 ~~think they have ever done one here, in order to get at their~~

1(B)

1(B)

1 ~~codes and ciphers~~ and in the process, you obviously work up
 2 some people who are able to do this kind of work, which is
 3 quite different from the normal life style of most of us.

4 Mr. Harvey had been a very venturesome officer in the
 5 past. He was responsible for the Berlin tunnel. And he was
 6 sent down to take this job. And he assumed as part of it the
 7 capability of -- he was given by Mr. Bissel this chore of
 8 carrying on this particular operation as well.

9 Mr. Schwarz. Had he been the person who had, in
 10 connection with the abortive effort to
 11 hired an agent for that purpose?

12 Mr. Colby. I have forgotten whether he hired him. He 1(B)
 13 hired a foreigner. And this foreigner's job -- ~~our records~~
 14 ~~indicate that this foreigner's job was tied up with the penet-~~
 15 ~~tration of code rooms and the safe cracking and things of this~~
 16 ~~nature for that purpose.~~ And there are some very obscure
 17 references that an additional assignment was to look into the
 18 possible . The evidence is
 19 that he went down to what is now Kinshasa, Elizabethville in
 20 1960, stayed there a few weeks, and left in October, I
 21 believe. And then Mr. Lumumba was killed thereafter in a totally
 22 separate set of circumstances in which we had nothing to do.
 23 There is some indication that a CIA officer who was asked
 24 to have something to do with this particular job said he did
 25 not want to do it.

TOP SECRET

1 was not advised of the assassination activities. Quite likely
2 I cannot say that for sure, but I know the compartmentation
3 system was such.

4 Chairman Church. What was the name of the CIA agent who
5 was given the responsibility for liaison between the CIA and
6 the Warren Commission?

7 Mr. Colby. To my knowledge it is Mr. Raymond Rocca.

8 Chairman Church. Where is it now?

9 Mr. Colby. He retired at the end of December of last year.
10 He remained working for us for a few months. I think he is
11 retired. I think he is retired. I believe he is still in
12 the Washington area.

13 Mr. Knoche. Yes, he is still working with us.

14 Mr. Colby. Still working with us to help on the transi-
15 tion of the whole counter intelligence program.

16 Chairman Church. Why did he retire?

17 Mr. Colby. That was the Angleton case, Mr. Chairman, and
18 the facts of that case were that I had had some professional
19 differences in the organization with Mr. Angleton as to the
20 way the counterintelligence business was run ~~and the way the~~ 1(b)

21 ~~account was handled~~. I believed that it required a
22 higher degree of coordination of the other elements of the
23 Directorate and of the Agency. We had debated this on various
24 occasions in the past. I did reorganize that staff in 1973 and
25 took a number of functions away from it. The liaison with the

TOP SECRET

1 FBI for instance, and a couple of other things. I gradually
2 endeavored to open up the [redacted] account to a better relation-
3 ship with our other Near Eastern activities. We debated this
4 over many months and on several occasions. We could never
5 really agree to it because he insisted on the importance of
6 retaining it where it was. I (h)

7 Mr. Angleton had done a very good job of establishing that
8 liaison years ago and knew a lot of the senior [redacted] who
9 were involved in it.

10 I believed there was inadequate coordination in the Arab
11 areas. I (h)

12 Also, I believed that there was a undue degree of compart-
13 mentation of that staff, that it needed more interchange with
14 our other divisions. We debated this and discussed it and I
15 set as my time limit for this discussion the end of December
16 because there were some very substantial retirement benefits
17 that people would loose if they stayed after that point. Then
18 unfortunately the Seymour Hirsh article of December 22nd came
19 to our attention before it was actually published, and so I
20 brought Mr. Angleton up and said that I was going to make two
21 basic decisions. I was going to move the [redacted] account from
22 his control and I was going to put some sucessor leadership I (h)
23 into the Head of the Counterintelligence Staff. I said I would
24 offer him a post of tying together some counterintelligence
25 doctrine, he could stay working with us. He did not have to

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1 Chinese Communists subsequently blamed the Chinese Nationalists
2 and the US for sabotaging the aircraft. The aircraft employee
3 had fled to Taiwan. We had nothing to do with that incident
4 and frankly heard about it after it occurred.

5 In the fall of 1956, a senior Chinese Nationalist official
6 informed an officer of CIA that a Chinese National planned to
7 assassinate Chou En Lai during his visit to Cambodia in
8 November '56 and had been thwarted by the Cambodian arrest of
9 the Chinese Nationalist officer sent to Phnom Penh to supervise
10 the attempt. We learned of this after it had happened and we
11 had nothing to do with it.

12 We had a relationship with the [redacted]
13 [redacted] over the years and they clearly have done
14 things without our knowledge or involvement, and in a number
15 of areas, but we have also worked together on some areas. LIBA

16 These are two that were separate.

17 Also I was asked to look at the photographs of Howard Hunt
18 and Sturgis that appeared in Newsweek some years ago. We
19 obtained this photograph from the FBI last night about 5 o'clock.
20 We had not had it before. We had a copy of the Newsweek
21 edition.

22 These are photographs of Howard Hunt in 1949, 1950 and
23 1961. This is the only photograph we have of Mr. Sturgis.
24 It is taken out of the Newsweek.

25 We have had no connection with Mr. Sturgis and so we have

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individuals in it.

Senator Schweiker. Did you get the other photograph, the supposed Oswald photograph leaving the Embassy?

Mr. Colby. I don't have that with me. It is in the Warren Commission published report. It is in there.

Senator Schweiker. It is in there?

Mr. Colby. Yes. It was cropped slightly in order to conceal where it was taken but it was --

Senator Schweiker. It is in the Warren Commission?

Mr. Colby. Yes, it is in the Warren Commission.

Just one additional matter.

Chairman Church. Just one thing I would like to say to you, Mr. Colby, before I forget it. ~~You have made reference to the [redacted] account and the special way that it had been handled under Mr. Angleton. Before we finish our review with you of covert operations we would like to have a more detailed statement of that matter.~~ 1(+)

Mr. Colby. Right.

Chairman Church. And I think you should prepare to discuss it with us and we will have further questions to ask you in connection with it.

I just wanted to give you notice.

Mr. Colby. Right. In our lexicon it doesn't count as a covert action but that is all right, no problem, I will cover it.

TOP SECRET

12
1 them.

2 Mr. Harvey was given the responsibility of this by Mr.
3 Bissel and originally it continued as a separate action from
4 the Castro operation, but Mr. Harvey was also given that
5 responsibility, and for all intents and purposes they became
6 wedded.

7 Mr. Helms was the person who formally approved ZR Rifle
8 as a project. ZR Rifle had a dual purpose that has not been
9 clarified by our inquiry. It apparently was in fact used for
10 the stated purposes, as far as organizational activities went
11 along, ~~which was to steal codes,~~ and Mr. Helms, when he
12 approved the project, authorized accounting on certification,
13 which meant that rather than the usual vouchers supporting
14 expenditures, that the officer involved would simply certify
15 that the money had been spent and this would be accepted.
16 It had a project amount of some dollars, \$7500 - \$10,000 --
17 some of it to include the salary of an agent, some to include
18 operating expenses.

19 So Mr. Helms' main appearance in the approval of ZR Rifle
20 does not necessarily equate with the date when he became
21 familiar with the Castro operation.

22 Mr. Schwarz. Because of the dual purpose of Rifle, Rifle
23 means both, rifle files and used rifles?

24 Mr. Breckinridge. It may mean either or both.

25 Mr. Colby. It is supposed to disassociate but sometimes

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1 Mr. Schwarz. November 1961?

2 Mr. Breckinridge. I think that is probably correct. It
3 was in the fall of 1961 that Mr. Harvey was given this assignment
4 by Mr. Bissel. I think Mr. Bissel left in 1962. I am not sure
5 of the dates, So Mr. Bissel would have known at that time.
6 But I am not sure after that.

7 Chairman Church. Helms succeeded Mr. Bissel as chief
8 of operations?

9 Mr. Colby. Deputy Director of Plans.

10 Chairman Church. Deputy Director for Plans.

11 Your record shows that Helms had knowledge of the ZR Rifle
12 operation, which, among other things, was to develop an executive
13 capability -- whatever that means. Presumably that means a
14 capability to conduct an assassination if and when authorized
15 by proper authority?

16 Mr. Breckinridge. That is my understanding.

17 Chairman Church. Is that your understanding?

18 Mr. Breckinridge. Yes, sir.

19 Chairman Church. Do your records show that, or is that
20 based upon what has been revealed through your interrogation?

21 Mr. Breckinridge. First, let me go back and clarify, then
22 I will answer this question, if I may.

23 Mr. Helms approved ZR Rifle, ~~which the record shows has the~~
24 ~~responsibility of stealing codes, essentially.~~ 1(b)

25 My understanding, from my interviews, is that ZR Rifle had

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Chairman Church. Senator Hart.

Senator Hart of Colorado. Mr. Colby, in connection with ZR Rifle, I think you testified or your associate said this was a multi-purpose operation, including stealing codes, and the development of the capability of what euphemistically is called executive action. 1(B)

In your professional judgment, and with your history of your background in the Agency, does it make any sense to you that a major operation, a major intelligence gathering operation of the sort of stealing codes, which I assume means from other governments, would be mounted under the direction of a man about whom all I know is that Mr. Harvey has a background of something like a soldier of fortune, and funded at the level, I should say, of \$7500 to \$10,000? 1(B)

Does it not suggest to you that stealing codes was in fact an internal cover for what was explicitly an assassination operation with unlimited, non-voucher financial capability? 1(B)

Mr. Colby. No, not that it is purely a cover.

In the first place, Mr. Harvey had a very successful tour in Berlin where he ran the Berlin tunnel operation, which was one of our major successful intelligence operations.

Mr. Harvey was a very colorful figure who had his lifestyle, which is different than some others, but he had been very effective at that, and very adventuresome in that category of signals intelligence and a very venturesome idea of that nature. 1(B)

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1 He was in the assignment of Chief of the FI Division staff.

2 ~~That staff's major function is to conduct the signals intelligence~~
3 ~~work which must be done in the clandestine service.~~ 1(B)

4 It makes our efforts today to [redacted]

5 [redacted] and things of that nature, and it involves

6 the breaking into of safes and things, all that complicated

7 material. 1(B)

8 Now, the thing that puts it together with this "capability"

9 executive action, is the high degree of compartmentation of

10 this material, that kind of a project. In other words, a

11 code-breaking, a stealing operation, obviously, that is to be

12 kept very, very secret. If you get caught in it, it has all

13 sorts of very bad diplomatic implications, and so forth. 1(B)

14 Therefore, there is a system of very sharp compartmentation of

15 the work of that particular group.

16 You also are dealing with some very venturesome people

17 who are willing to [redacted] and 1(B)

18 take the chance of getting caught.

19 So, given you have a man who had some good technical

20 experience, who is a venturesome type himself and is running a

21 program which is not too far off the requirements of high

22 compartmentation, and a very high risk kind of operation, and

23 therefore, for Mr. Bissel to have selected Harvey to carry out

24 this project seems to me that it is compatible that he could

25 be running code-breaking projects, or code stealing projects.

1 as well as this other activity.

2 Now, in the lifestyle at the time, not mentioning the second
3 one, this gets back into the recordkeeping that we have been
4 discussing. It was not to be put on the record although to be
5 done. That is a perfectly proper hypothesis, it seems to me,
6 but to say that ~~the code stealing~~ was only a cover I think is ¹_B
7 probably an unwarranted conclusion.

8 Senator Hart of Colorado. What about the level of funding
9 of \$7,500 to \$10,000?

10 Mr. Colby. That is not very much money for that kind of
11 an operation.

12 Senator Hart of Colorado. Precisely. I think it is too
13 little.

14 Mr. Colby. No. For a capability of that nature, it is
15 largely a staff operation. In other words, you use your own
16 staff officers. You may hire an agent or something, but I don't
17 think you can draw much conclusion from the actual number on
18 the figure one way or the other.

19 This might not have been the only such project. You know,
20 an assassination project would cost you more money than that,
21 too.

22 Senator Hart of Colorado. Absolutely.

23 Mr. Colby. I find it hard to say that that is the only
24 amount of money involved. I think you get into a situation
25 where additional money would be put into either of those kinds

1 Chairman Church. Before you do, would you just explain
2 exactly what the relationship between CIA and Giancana and
3 Maheu was because that is not clear in my mind.

4 Would you develop for the Committee that whole relationship?

5 Mr. Breckinridge. Robert Maheu used to work for the
6 FBI and he resigned from the FBI and opened a private investiga-
7 tive firm here in Washington and CIA used him from time to
8 time for certain kinds of support activities.

9 Chairman Church. What kind of support activities?

10 Mr. Breckinridge. On one occasion he obtained a female
11 companion 1(B)

12 Chairman Church. What other kind of support?

13 Mr. Breckinridge. In the early days -- and this becomes
14 an embarrassment. As nearly as I can reconstruct, the people
15 who knew him decided to put him on a retainer in the Office
16 of Security, which they did for awhile, until he was so
17 successful he said he no longer needed the retainer, which he
18 didn't do much to earn. He later got involved representing
19 one of the Greek shipping interests and we were given the
20 results of some of the information that he obtained from that
21 where there was a fight between Niarchos and Onassis. We
22 think he may have had some involvement in another ~~foreign~~
23 ~~leader's~~ companionship when he was in this country. I don't
24 have the details. I think we can probably reconstruct it for
25 you.

smn 1
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1 Mr. Schwarz. I would like to pick up on the discussion
2 we had.

3 Chairman Church. Mr. Schwarz has five minutes more, and
4 we will conclude, and I would like to ask the Committee to stay
5 on for ten more minutes for an executive session.

6 Mr. Schwarz. In the discussion we had on the use of
7 criminal elements, we have dealt with the Castro operation.

8 In the middle of the book supplied to us by Mr. Breckinridge
9 earlier this week, there is a discussion about the Lumumba
10 operation, and the Agent [redacted].

11 Now, is it a fact that [redacted] was the agent, or asset,
12 however you would refer to him, who apparently was considered
13 for the effort [redacted], which never took place;
14 is that right?

15 Mr. Colby. Yes, sir.

16 Mr. Schwarz. Now, is it accurate that [redacted] operated

17 ~~in Europe trying to spot and assess individuals whom the Agency~~
18 ~~could use in safecracking operations?~~ 1(B)

19 Mr. Colby. This is what is reported, and it is quite
20 possible.

21 Mr. Breckinridge. The record indicates that.

22 Mr. Schwarz. And is it further so that one of the CIA
23 officers who first met [redacted] was on a

24 ~~trip overseas to find safecrackers and document suppliers?~~ 1(B)

25 Mr. Colby. Yes, that is what it says.

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