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Vol. 1 OF 3

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R2970

The United States Senate

Report of Proceedings

3/4/77
E8

Hearing held before

Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities

7600091732

Wednesday, April 14, 1976

Washington, D.C.

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

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

- - -

Wednesday, April 14, 1976

- - -

United States Senate,
Select Committee to Study Government
Operations with Respect to
Intelligence Activities,
Washington, D. C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:35 o'clock p.m., in Room 608, Capitol Hill Hotel, Senator Richard S. Schweiker, presiding.

Present: Senator Schweiker (presiding).

Also Present: James Johnston, Paul Wallach and Michael Madigan, Professional Staff Members.

- - -

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS KARAMESSINES

Mr. Johnston. Would you state for the record you full name and address?

Mr. Karamessines. Thomas Karamessines, 6726 Kennedy Lane, Falls Church, Virginia.

Mr. Johnston. And you have previously testified before the Committee, and have been furnished a copy of the rules, and are aware of your right to counsel with regard to the Committee, is that correct?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. Let the record show that Senator Schweiker will be here presently.

But it is my understanding, Mr. Karamessines, that it is agreeable to go ahead without the Senator present?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes.

Mr. Johnson. Would you state for the record your position with the Agency in the fall of 1963?

Mr. Karamessines. I was Assistant Deputy Director for Plans.

Mr. Johnson. And the Director for Plans was Mr. Helms, is that correct?

Mr. Karamessines. Correct.

Mr. Johnston. And would you describe briefly --

Mr. Karamessines. I should correct that. The Deputy Director for Plans, that is the title, Deputy Director for

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Plans.

Mr. Johnston. That is correct. Would you state briefly your rile as Assistant to Mr. Helms?

Mr. Karamessines. It was generally to keep abreast of our operational projects, to review the daily cable and other traffic for referral to Mr. Helms, and matters of particular interest to him, to assist him by looking after managerial problems relating to the general administration of the Directorate of Plans, and to act in his place when he was away.

Mr. Johnston. Were there any other Assistant Directors for Plans?

Mr. Karamessines. In the Deputy Directorate for Plans?

Mr. Johnston. That is correct.

Mr. Karamessines. No.

Mr. Johnston. And did Mr. Helms have an Executive Officer?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, he had one or two. But I don't recall who they were at that time.

Mr. Johnston. And would you distinguish your function from theirs?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes. The Executive Officer would have had no command or line responsibility, whereas I did.

Mr. Johnston. Let me go to the period before the assassination of President Kennedy.

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1 And to refresh your memory, Lee Harry Oswald visited
2 Mexico City in September and early October of 1963, and CIA
3 surveillance there picked up the fact of his visit to the
4 Soviet Embassy.
5 And I want to show you Director Message Number 74830
6 of 10 October 1963. Principally I am interested in the fact
7 that on the third page of that you are the authenticating
8 Officer. And I will give you a chance to perruse the message.
9 Mr. Karamessines. Actually I am the releasing officer.
10 Mr. Johnston. You are the releasing officer?
11 Mr. Karamessine. That is right. I don't know who some
12 of the other people here are, because their names are not
13 listed. The only name that has been left on here is my name
14 as releasing officer, right?
15 Mr. Johnston. Right. Then the originating unit is
16 what on that message?
17 Mr. Karamessine. WH-3, Mexico.
18 Mr. Johnston. What you your capacity be as reviewing
19 officer of that message?
20 Mr. Karamessines. To make sure that it wasn't violating
21 any particular policies of ours, particularly since it was
22 dealing with a man who at least had been American, and might
23 still be an American. And we were taking an interest in this
24 fellow even though he wasn't an American. And normally we
25 wouldn't do that, unless there was good reason -- as there

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1 obviously was in this case, because he had been a Marine, and
2 had defected, officially defected to the Soviet Union, accord-
3 ing to this message in 1959.
4 Mr. Johnston. We are operating with a zerox copy of the
5 message. But is that a copy of your signature on the third
6 page?
7 Mr. Karamessines. Yes.
8 Mr. Johnston. And with that is it fair to establish
9 that you at least read the message and knew of the activity
10 on the date you read the message?
11 Mr. Karamessines. I read the message. And it concerns
12 a Marine defector to the Soviet Union who apparently, accord-
13 ing to the incoming message to which this was a response,
14 was trying to get in touch with some Soviets or Cubans in
15 Mexico. That would be the extent of my interest in it at the
16 time. And I would have ascertained that this certainly was
17 a legitimate interest of the CIA in an American, as an
18 exception to the general rule.
19 Mr. Johnston. Do you know of any operational interest
20 that the CIA had in Oswald?
21 Mr. Karamessines. No, never at any time to my knowledge.
22 Mr. Johnston. Were you aware that in the fall of 1963
23 the CIA took an interest in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee?
24 Mr. Karamessines. I didn't know that.
25 Mr. Johnston. Were you later aware of it?

Mr. Karamessines. I have seen allegations of that. I don't know whether that is true or not.

Mr. Johnston. But you had no involvement in any contemplated action or operation?

Mr. Karamessines. No, absolutely not.

Mr. Johnston. Were you knowledgeable of the CIA progarm operations directed against Cuba?

Mr. Karamessines. Generally, in very general terms, yes.

Mr. Johnston. And those were run by whom at the time in the fall of 1963?

Mr. Karamessines. They had had the Bay of Pigs the previous year, right?

Mr. Johnston. No, 1961, April and May of 1961.

Mr. Karamessines. That is right, 1961. I don't know whether the Cuban activity has been -- my recollection doesn't permit me to say with assurance that the Cuban activity had been transferred back, had been transferred to the WH Division, or if it continued to function as a special staff of some kind, I don't recall. But it was one or the other.

Mr. Johnston. Was Mr. Fitzgerald the Head of the Cuban Division?

Mr. Karamessines. He was at one time, yes, before he became DP at one time, he was in charge, yes.

Mr. Johnston. And did he have a unit called the Special Affairs Staff charged with Cuban operations?

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Mr. Karamessines. Yes, he did at one point.

Mr. Johnston. Who had in the fall of 1963 counterintelligence responsibility for Cuban matters?

Mr. Karamessines. General Cuban matters?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

Mr. Karamessines. Counterintelligence responsibility, in a case like that, would have been an integral part of the special Staff, with the assistance and the contribution and the general staff supervision of our Counterintelligence Staff, the senior Counterintelligence Staff.

Mr. Johnston. And that would have been --

Mr. Karamessines. Mr. Angleton's Office.

Mr. Johnston. Mr. Angleton's Office. Was the Special Affairs Counterintelligence separate from the general Counterintelligence Staff?

Mr. Karamessines. I would have been. How much of it they had, I don't know.

Mr. Johnston. Who coordinated the Special Affairs Staff counterintelligence withe Counterintelligence Division?

Mr. Karamessines. They just coordinated directly, I would imagine. I don't think we had an additional officer appointed to the former coordination function. They would have been required -- normally that would be the SOP -- to coordinate their actions with the senior Counterintelligence Staff.

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1 Mr. Johnston. Was it SOP for SAS to inform the
2 Counterintelligence Staff of all --
3 Mr. Karamessines. I don't know that. I was not very
4 close to the whole Cuban activity. It was an activity that had
5 been given birth while I was abroad. And it had its disaster
6 in late 1961. And I was brought back in 1962 as a DDP in
7 March. And my guess would be that it was a conscious decision
8 not to involve me too closely in the remnants of the other
9 activity.
10 Mr. Johnston. Moving to the assassination of President
11 Kenney and the day of the assassination, how was the matter
12 and the problem and the investigation if any, of the assassina-
13 tion handled immediately upon receiving word? Was there any
14 task force created to handle the matter?
15 Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall the creation of any
16 task force. But I do remember that because the Counterintelli-
17 gence Staff was responsible in any case for conducting our
18 liaison with the other American intelligence security agencies,
19 especially the FBI, the Secret Service, that the Counterin-
20 telligence Staff was designated, to my best recollection now,
21 as the focal point for the receipt of requests for information
22 from these other agencies, and for responding to those
23 requests for information. And as a result of that, as far as
24 I can now recall, all communications going out to Secret
25 Service or FBI in response to requests for information were

prepared by the Counterintelligence Staff, and were either sent directly by that Staff, or if the content warranted, they were brought up the line for review and signature by Mr. Helms or myself in his absence.

Mr. Johnston. And again, just so that we are clear, when you refer to Counterintelligence Staff you are referring to Mr. Angleton's operation?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, I am.

Mr. Johnston. What about the Cuban Counterintelligence Staff, how were they staffed in the investigation?

Mr. Karamessines. You mean SAS?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

Mr. Karamessine. Which we mentioned earlier?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

Mr. Karamessines. I don't know if they were still in being at that time. But if they were -- I don't know the answer to your question, but my assumption would be that anything they had to contribute would have been funneled into the Counterintelligence Staff.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever specifically -- do you recall asking them to make a contribution yourself?

Mr. Karamessines. I?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

Mr. Karamessines. No, I do not.

Mr. Johnston. Do you recall any correspondence or any

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1 information?

2 Mr. Karamessines. No, I do not. There may have been,
3 there may have been instructions from Mr. Helms, for example,
4 to Mr. Fitzgerald. But I don't recall seeing any such
5 instructions.

6 Mr. Johnston. Did you ever participate in meetings or
7 see correspondence in which Mr. Helms directed Mr. Angleton
8 to perform those functions for the Counterintelligence Staff?

9 Mr. Karamessines. No. But Mr. Angleton certainly was
10 performing them, and he wouldn't have stepped in to take over
11 the activity if Mr. Helms hadn't made it plain that that was
12 the way he wanted it handled.

13 Mr. Johnston. Who was Mr. J. C. King in this era?

14 Mr. Karamessines. He was at this time, I believe, the
15 Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division.

16 Mr. Johnston. For the Deputy Directorate for Plans?

17 Mr. Karamessines. Right.

18 Mr. Johnston. And to the best of your recollection, who
19 was Jack Whitney?

20 Mr. Karamessines. Well, I know Jack Whitten as an Officer
21 of the DDP. But what capacity he was serving in at that
22 particular point, I don't remember.

23 Mr. Johnston. Was he at that time involved with SAS?

24 Mr. Karamessines. I don't know.

25 Mr. Johnston. Was Mr. King?

Mr. Karamessines. Was Mr. King? Well, he would have been generally aware of SAS's activities, since they were taking place within his geographical area, as a Special Staff.

Mr. Johnston. Did he have operational control of SAS?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't believe so.

Mr. Johnston. And operational control of SAS was --

Mr. Karamessines. It would have been in the nads of the Director of SAS, Mr. Fitzgerald, who would have been responsible to Mr. Helms.

Mr. Johnston. Directly to Mr. Helms?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. Did Mr. Fitzgerald respond through you to Mr. Helms?

Mr. Karamessines. Not to these matters.

Mr. Johnston. We have touched before --

Mr. Wallach. Is there a reason why he didn't respond on those matters?

Mr. Karamessines. I had explained before you came in, I think, that I came back here in March of 1962, after the collapse of the Cuban thing, and the changes that had taken place, and the place was in a bit of a turmoil. And my instructions were to look after the day to day business.

Mr. Johnston. Off the record a minute.

(Off the record discussion.)

Mr. Johnston. Back on the record.

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Mr. Karamessines. My charge from Mr. Helms was that in view of the turmoil that had been taking place in the Agency, and specifically in the DDP, that we needed more than ever to get back to normal operating, in other words, to bring people down off the chandeliers. We had a change of guard, Mr. Bissell had been removed, and Mr. Dulles had been removed, and Mr. Helms had been brought in as Deputy Director for Plans. And the idea there was that we were going to get back to basic, classic intelligence and counterintelligence operations, and we were going to be done with some of these high flown ventures that just get us into trouble, some of these ridiculous things that had been happening prior to that time.

When I came back my charge from Helms was, look, you see the general running of the DDP, the day to day, normal functioning. We have got Fitzgerald -- I think it was Fitzgerald -- and he will be worrying about Cuban things.

He was a senior officer, don't forget. When Mr. Helms went up to the Deputy Director of the Agency, Mr. Fitzgerald was selected to be the DDP, not I, even though I had been the Deputy to Mr. Helms.

Senator Schweiker. (Now presiding)

When was that that happened?

Mr. Karamessines. 1965.

So that my job was to get matters back to the kind of procedures, controls and phase by phase, and step by step

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1 administration that I was familiar with, and which had
2 functioned, I thought, very well all through the fifties, when
3 I was serving for the most part back in Headquarters most of
4 the time at all.
5 In 1959 when Mr. Bissell took over he changed a lot of
6 things. And controls became very loosey goosey. And I think
7 the Agency and the Clandestine Service suffered quite a bit
8 from that short but for me devastating interval in the history
9 of it.
10 But what Helms tried to do was get this thing back on
11 track. And I was supposed to help him do this. That is why
12 he brought me back, when my tour of duty was nearly up.
13 Senator Schweiker. You were excluded from the chain of
14 command?
15 Mr. Karamessines. It was simply made clear that this
16 was a Special Staff whose only job would be this, and I
17 didn't have to be all that concerned about it. That didn't
18 mean that I couldn't know what was happening there if I wanted
19 to know. But I had my hands absolutely full with things that
20 I had to deal with myself. And here was a very senior fellow
21 with a staff of his own dealing with just this special thing,
22 which was an outgrowth and a result, or whatever you want to
23 call it, of the Cuban operations, which I knew nothing about.
24 Senator Schweiker. And how did the White House
25 coordination or liaison go with that Special Affairs Section?

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What was the flow there?

Mr. Karamessines. Not through me.

Senator Schweiker. I understand that.

Mr. Karamessines. It would be through Fitzgerald and Helms.

Senator Schweiker. Who would have handled that in the White House?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't know. I have heard Bobby Kennedy. But I wasn't there.

Mr. Johnston. Let me continue with the Special Affa Staff. Did they also have responsibility for the Cuban ex groups and the operations of Cuban exiles?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, they did, that was all part o their ball of wax.

Senator Schweiker. Like Alpha 66, would that have bee under them?

Mr. Karamessines. Anything relating to operations directly or indirectly suppored by the CIA against the Castro Government, landing agents, small boat infiltrations, screening fellows down in Miami, working with the Immigrati and Nationalization, FBI, very closely. All of this was SA with the help of the Counterintelligence Staff as required.

Mr. Wallach. On the other side of the coin, what about the question of Cuba's operations vis-a-vis the US? Was that also out of SAS?

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Mr. Karamessines. Yes, in part it was. But the Counterintelligence Staff had a good part of that, too.

Mr. Wallach. Who in the Counterintelligence Staff?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't know, I can't put my finger on it. But SAS had a good part of that, because SAS, don't forget, had to protect itself against the activity of the DGI, the Cuban Intelligence Service. And we knew that the DGI was very active, particularly in Canada, in sending fellows down into the States as agents through Canada. And ever so often SAS, through its activities in Miami would pick up reflections of DGI activities and report these of course into Counterintelligence and the FBI.

Mr. Johnston. Let's go back to the investigation of the assassination. Do you recall the incident with Sylvia Dura, who was the Mexican employed by the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City?

Mr. Karamessines. From the Cuban Consulate?

Mr. Johnston. The Cuban Consolate, that is correct.

Do you recall that you received information that Sylvi Dura was going to be arrested by Mexican authorities?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, I have a recollection of that. I don't recall the circumstances, but that rings a bell, if that is what you mean. And she was going to be arrested and questioned, is that right?

Mr. Johnston. That is correct.

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Mr. Karamessines. For our account, if I recall correctly, is that right?

Mr. Johnston. That is less clear, as to your account.

Mr. Karamessines. I see.

Mr. Johnston. My question is, first of all, were you ever told or do you know whether Sylvia Dura was a contact for the Agency?

Mr. Karamessines. No, and I don't believe she was ever -- I have no knowledge and do not believe she was ever a contact for the Agency, for the CIA.

Senator Schweiker. Let's ask the same question of Alvarado.

Mr. Karamessines. He was that nut that you mentioned earlier that came in and gave them a tall story which turned out to be false.

Senator Schweiker. Was he ever an informer or source of information?

Mr. Karamessines. The answer is no as far as anything I ever heard from anybody.

Mr. Johnston. Do you recall ordering Mr. Whitten to call off the arrest of Sylvia Dura, proposed arrest of Sylvia Dura?

Mr. Karamessines. Do I recall ordering Mr. Whitney to call it off?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

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Mr. Karamessines. No, I don't recall that. Are you sure I ordered him to call off the arrest? Maybe somebody else did. I don't recall any such thing. I don't recall anybody ordering it.

Mr. Johnston. Let me show you, then, a cable which apparently was sent out after -- by way of background, prior to this cable going out, Mexico City had cabled and said, Mexican police have already arrested Dura, so we can't call off her arrest.

Mr. Karamessines. I see.

Mr. Johnston. And then this cable followed, Director 84916 of 20 November 1963.

Mr. Karamessines. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. Who originated that cable?

Mr. Karamessines. The origin of this cable -- it looks like it came from the Mexican Branch of the WH Division. I notice that the CI Staff is on distribution.

Senator Schweiker. Who was Head of the Mexican Branch?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall at this point.

Senator Schweiker. Wasn't David Phillips working down there at the time?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall. You can get that, I am sure, very easily from the Agency. I certainly can't recall who was in charge of the Mexican Branch at that time.

Senator Schweiker. On the structure of operations the

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way that you were structured then, would the Head of the Mexico City Branch have reported to whom under your procedures?

Mr. Karamessines. To the Director of the Western Hemisphere Division, the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division, who as J. C. King.

Mr. Johnston. And he would have reported to whom?

Mr. Karamessines. And he would have reported to Mr. Helms, or in his absence, to me.

Mr. Johnston. In other words, it would go to Mr. Helms unless you were acting in this capacity?

Mr. Karamessines. That is right, he was the DDP at that time.

Mr. Johnston. Now, if operations were going on out of Mexico City against Castro, would they have fallen under the Special Affairs Section, or would they have gone up the chain of command we have just described, or would it depend?

Mr. Karamessines. It could have happened either way. In other words, they could have been handled by the Special Affairs Section in close coordination with the WH Division, because it happened to be not in the States here but over in the WH Division.

Mr. Johnston. In Director 84916 which you just looked at, it is a flash message which is of the highes priority, is that correct?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, in terms of the emergency of the

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1 messages getting there, correct.

2 Mr. Johnston. And it says, arrest of Sylvia Dura is an

3 extremely serious matter which could prejudice -- using the

4 code word which I think means United States?

5 Mr. Karamessines. That is right.

6 Mr. Johnston. -- freedom of action on entire question

7 of -- another code word which means Cuban --

8 Mr. Karamessines. Right.

9 Mr. Johnston. -- responsibility. Why was the arrest of

10 Sylvia Dura such an extremely serious matter that it could

11 prejudice the US freedom of action on the question of Cuban

12 responsibility?

13 Mr. Karamessines. The only thing I can surmise here --

14 and this is now out of context, and 15 years later, or whenever

15 it is -- that while she was still there, and we had the lines

16 on the phone, and she was in here job -- and maybe we had

17 informants, I don't know, I don't recall -- the idea was there,

18 maybe we would learn some more about Cuban responsibility,

19 possible Cuban responsibility, since this guy had been talking

20 to the Consulate.

21 Mr. Johnston. Did you discuss this matter with Mr.

22 Helms?

23 Mr. Karamessines. I haven't the faintest recollection.

24 I couldn't possibly answer a question like that.

25 Mr. Johnston. Did you discuss it with Mr. Whitten or

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Mr. King?

Mr. Karamessines. I couldn't possibly answer a question like that. That would have been one of hundreds of cables I would have seen that one day, any given day.

Mr. Johnston. Let me just put to you, though, my review has not necessarily been comprehensive, but this appears to be the only flash message sent out in the course of these events --

Mr. Karamessines. I would be surprised if you didn't find others, number one. And number two, even though it is a flash message, and I read it, I couldn't possibly recall with whom I might have discussed it at the time, who brought it to me for signature, and whether it was sent, just sent in, or handed to me by my secretary, I don't recall the circumstances. But it is a very natural and very proper and quite understandable operational message, given the great interest that we had in what this woman might be able to tip us off to if we could continue listening secretly to here conversations with others. She might call Aunt Tillie living in Guadalajara and say, Aunt Tillie, I am going to take it on the lam here, because I think we have been caought trying to skp the bill, or whatever.

Now, here are the Mexicans going to arrest her. And this kind of cut the ground out from under our feet at that point. And what the message is saying in effect is, let's try to keep

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1 this as quiet as possible and see what we can salvage from it.
2 We are also hopeful that we could get to talk to her or
3 interrogate her or question her ourselves, or arrange for the
4 FBI or Secret Service to do it.
5 Mr. Johnston. And they also put to you that this
6 message indicates the existence of a question at CIA of Cuban
7 responsibility?
8 Mr. Karamessines. There was a question at that point
9 after the President was killed of anybody's responsibilities,
10 starting with the Russians, because Oswald had been a defector
11 to the Russians, and then going right away to the Cuban,
12 because they were palsy walsy and even in touch with the Cuban
13 Consulate in Mexico.
14 These were natural suspicions at the time and we would
15 have been derelict not to have had them. What we didn't have
16 was the kind of evidence that would have proved one or the
17 other.
18 Mr. Johnston. And to explore the question of Cuban
19 responsibility, who should have been directed to investigate
20 that?
21 Mr. Karamessines. It was under investigation constantly.
22 That is what was being done. This message is an indication
23 of that. WH was doing it, and CI Staff was interested in
24 pursuing it.
25 Mr. Johnston. But didn't it occur to you that SAS

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should have also been involved?

Mr. Karamessines. I think anything SAS might have had to contribute on this thing at the time it contributed.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know that?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I assume that, I don't know it, from the way we worked.

Mr. Johnston. You do know that the CI Staff was involved?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. And you do know the Western Hemisphere Division was involved?

Mr. Karamessines. Right.

Mr. Johnston. But you only assume htat SAS was involved?

Mr. Karamessines. That is right. SAS's business was an offensive role, responsibility, to send agents -- their counterintelligence intelligence was a very limited thing designed to protect their own activities against penetration, whereas this had much wider scope. This was talking about some fellow who had been a Marine, and had deserted and gone to the Soviet Union, all of these things. And then when he shows up in Mexico he is not within SAS's perameter, he is within WH's perameter.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever ask Mr. Helms whether SAS had gotten involved in the investigation?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall asking such a question.

Mr. Johnston. Off the record a second.

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(Off the record discussion)

Senator Schweiker. Back on the record.

Mr. Johnston. Let me show you two more messages. One is Director 84855, 23 November 1963. And the other one is Director 84837, 23 November. And you are the releasing officer for the Chief of the Western Hemisphere Division on both of them.

Mr. Karamessines. He probably wasn't available at the time and they brought it into me. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. And is it a fair statement that those two messages together ask Mexico City Station for all information on Alferiev or Kostikov --

Mr. Karamessines. One is Alferiev, as I read it here, and the other one asks information on one Kostikov, both of whom apparently were either identified or suspected Russian intelligence officers.

Mr. Johnston. Now, when you sent these two messages out, when you signed on as releasing officer, would you have expected to receive back everything Mexico City Station had on those two?

Mr. Karamessines. Not I, the Division would that sent the message.

Mr. Johnston. But that was what was being called for by the two mesages?

Mr. Karamessines. Well, whatever the messages ask for,

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1 whatever information do you have on his movements on a certain
2 date, and so forth.
3 Mr. Johnston. The message on Kostikov says: "Urgently
4 require the following information about Kostikov, the names
5 and background, his contacts not already reported to
6 Headquarters."
7 And the message on Alferiev said: "Request reported in
8 coverage Alferiev as with Kostikov." Now, is it correct that
9 Mexico City should have interpreted this to give you everything
10 they had not already reported on these two individuals?
11 Mr. Karamessines. Not already reported, yes.
12 Mr. Johnston. As an experienced Intelligence Officer and
13 as Assistant DDP, what would you have expected the Counter-
14 intelligence Staff to do with those contacts, with the reports
15 coming back from Mexico City?
16 Mr. Karamessines. With the information?
17 Mr. Johnston. Yes.
18 Mr. Karamessines. It depends on what the information
19 said.
20 Mr. Johnston. The message reporting back on this gave
21 all contacts, known contacts that these individuals had in
22 Mexico City. And what is the next step in your process?
23 Mr. Karamessines. You check these names out to see
24 whether your files give any evidence of suspicios activity.
25 And if they don't, if they simply don't indicate any suspicious

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activity, that would be the end of it. If it does indicate suspicious activity, then you would follow from there, and you would pass this information on to other interested parties within the Agency or within the Government, and you would carry on from there and investigate further.

Mr. Johnston. That is the point I am getting to. If it reports back that Alferiev has contacts with a named individual, is it routine standard operating procedure to check the CI file on that named individual?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, unless the desk officer that receives it happens to know who that fellow is and doesn't have to check. And that happens quite frequently.

Mr. Johnston. And do you know anything about the responses on these two meassages?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I don't recall the messages going out, and I certainly don't recall any responses.

Mr. Johnston. Your response earlier on why we might have warned about the arrest of Sylvia Dura in terms of damaging our tap, the telephone surveillance --

Mr. Karamessines. I didn't suggest, sir, that we might be damaging our tap. What I was suggesting was that by arresting her they were taking her out of her office, her living quarters, and putting her under arrest. And this would reduce and eliminate indeed our chances of hearing her further.

Mr. Johnston. I understand that. What I don't reconcile

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that with is the way the first sentence is worded: "The arrest of Sylvia Dura is an extremely serious matter which could prejudice all freedom of action on the entire question of Cuban responsibility." It doesn't say specifically the thing that I would sharte with you as the logical thing to be concerned about, it seems more concerned about whether we have to come to some conclusion we may not want to come to relating to Cuban responsibility. And I am puzzled by that for two reasons. Number one, it doesn't express the things that you would logically say, which is what you said, and number two, why are we more worried about our freedom of action as opposed to finding out what happened?

Mr. Karamessines. I can answer that very quickly, I believe. I see what you are driving at now. I can easily see a situation in which we wouldn't want the Mixican Government or any other government to know what Sylvia Dura may have to say about Oswald or the President's assassination, assuming she had anything to do, we wouldn't want anybody else to know until we had had a chance to focus on it ourselves and decide what our Government, what position our Government was going to take about it.

Let me put the case this way, if I may. Let us assume that Sylvia Dura is hauled in by the Mexicans, and she says, fellows, it is very simple. I know, because she was hired -- because this Mexican, ex-Marine, was actually hired by the

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1 Soviet Government with the assistance of the Cuban Intelligence
2 Service to kill President Kennedy. And you get a real hot
3 little Mexican counterintelligence police guy, and he says,
4 I have got the scoop of the century. And he calls his newspaper
5 guys in, and he says, this is the information, fellows, this
6 is what the witness has said. And the next morning the world
7 is reading: Soviets and Cubans planned assassination of
8 President Kennedy.
9 Now, you are sitting downtown in the White House or in
10 the State Department, and you are wondering, where do we go
11 next, declar war on the Soviets and the Cubans? Where do we
12 go? You would prefer to be in a situation where, if this
13 woman had had a -- and I use the term had had, because to my
14 recollection she didn't have much light to throw on it, or any
15 light really -- if she had that kind of dynamite information
16 we would have been in a much better position, our Government,
17 or President, and the State Department would have been in a
18 much better position had we had a chance to focus on whatever
19 information she had to give us. Now, here she would be giving
20 it first to somebody else, assuming she had it, which she did
21 not.
22 Mr. Johnston. Did conversations like that actually take
23 place at CIA on November 22nd and 23rd?
24 Mr. Karamessines. There were all kinds of conversations
25 about this thing taking place, certainly.

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1 Mr. Johnston. And did this take place with regard to
2 Dura?
3 Mr. Karamessines. All I can tell you is that they must
4 have, but if you were to ask me to recall a specific one, I
5 can't do that.
6 Mr. Johnston. I am not asking you to recall a specific
7 one, but whether you participated in conversations at CIA with
8 other officials of the Agency to the effect that you have just
9 talked about, that if the word gets out that there is Cuban
10 or Soviet involvement in this, we need to know that first
11 indpendently, we want to know it first independently, it would
12 give our Government that much head start in deciding what the
13 heck it wanted to do about it.
14 Were there any conversations -- and again in a general
15 sense -- that looked at US courses of action in the event
16 Cuban responsibility was established?
17 Mr. Karamessines. I recall no such conversations.
18 Mr. Johnston. In the event that Soviet responsibility --
19 Mr. Karamessines. I recall no such conversations, and
20 I was not a party to them, to the best of my recollection.
21 Mr. Johnston. But there was great concern that your
22 investigation might turn up foreign involvement?
23 Mr. Karamessines. There was no great concern that it
24 might turn up. We weren't afraid of it. If it came it would
25 come. What we were hoping to do, though, as a service to the

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Government, was to try if possible to have that information before anybody else -- before any foreigners had it, to get it exclusively, so that our Government could focus on what if any action it felt it would wish to take in the situation. As it turned out, we never had that kind of information. So it was a moot question.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you two specific areas. And my question will be whether they came to your attention. Were you aware that the CIA received information that on the afternoon of the assassination an unidentified passenger landed at the airport in Mexico City on a two engine aircraft, boarded a Cuban aircraft bound for Havana, bypassed customs and rode in the cockpit of the Cuban aircraft that afternoon?

Mr. Karamessines. Was I aware of that?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

Mr. Karamessines. No, at least I have no recollection of it. Somebody might have mentioned it at the time in passing. What was the significance of it?

Mr. Johnston. I just wondered whether you would attribute any significance to it.

Mr. Karamessines. No, none at all. The DGI had quite a lot of freedom of movement, freedom of action in Mexico in those days.

Senator Schweiker. When was this, the day of the assassination?

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1 Mr. Johnston. That is right.

2 Senator Schweiker. That wouldn't be significant to it,

3 the day of the assassination?

4 Mr. Karamessines. No, not particularly.

5 Senator Schweiker. You don't think that there some

6 special orders that went out to DGI as to where they were and

7 what they were doing on the day of the President's assassina-

8 tion?

9 Mr. Karamessines. First of all, I never heard of this

10 report. Let's start to that. And secondly, I didn't under-

11 stand you to say that it was a DGI officer that got on the

12 airplane, you said somebody got on the airplane and sat next

13 to the Cuban pilot and took off, without going through

14 customs.

15 Mr. Johnston. I am sorry, I did not tell you that they

16 held up the Cuban aircraft.

17 Mr. Karamessines. You see the difference now? You know

18 the story. He gives me a couple of tidbits and then you get

19 excited because I am not excited, see?

20 Senator Schweiker. The Cuban aircraft was held up for

21 1700 hours to 2200 hours awaiting this passenger. That was

22 the information the CIA received. And the passenger arrived

23 on a twin engine aircraft, bypassed customes, and went into the

24 Cuban airlines craft and rode in the cockpit. So he was

25 basically unidentified arriving under those circumstances.

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Mr. Karamessines. I had never heard of that report. I wasn't familiar with it.

Mr. Johnston. Were you familiar with the travel of a man named Gilberto Lopez who crossed the border into Mexico sometime on November 23rd?

Mr. Karamessines. No, that name doesn't ring a bell.

Mr. Johnston. And went to Mexico City, and on November 27th went to Havana as the only passenger on a Cuban airline flight to Havana.

Mr. Karamessines. No, that name doesn't ring a bell with me.

Mr. Johnston. And that never came to your attention?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall that. That doesn't mean it never came to my attention. But what I am talling you is that I don't remember having been apprized of that particular bit of information. It may well have been brought to my attention. And we might have done a lot about it at the time, and we might have reached conclusions on it. I just don't remember.

Mr. Johnston. If that was handled by SAS would you have been involved in it, the Lopez matter especially?

Mr. Karamessines. Well, I might have been, if Mr. Helms didn't happen to be there and they needed to report it to somebody, yes, I might have been. But I don't recall being involved in it.

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Mr. Johnston. As of November 1963 what knowledge did you have about CIA plots to assassinate foreign leaders?

Mr. Karamessines. None.

Mr. Johnston. And as Mr. Helms' Assistant you had not bee informed?

Mr. Karamessines. No.

Mr. Johnston. Have you read the Senate Select Committee report on Assassinations?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I have not.

Mr. Johnston. According to the information the Senate received, in August of 1963 Mr. Helms told Mr. McCone about certain CIA plots against Castro. Were you at that meeting?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know of that briefing or that report to Mr. McCone?

Mr. Karamessines. No sir, I did not.

Mr. Johnston. When did you first learn that the CIA had plots to assassinate Fidel Castro?

Mr. Karamessines. You will find this surprising, but it is true. At about the time that a fellow named Bill Harvey retired and went out to work as a lawyer in the Midwest, or shortly thereafter, he gave an interview which was published in one of the columns. And he then mentioned the names of Roselli and some other guy.

Senator Schweiker. Giancana?

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Mr. Karamessines. Yes, Giancana. And how they were involved in an effort to do away with Castro, and he, Harvey, had been the CIA man in charge of the activity, or some such story.

Now, when I read that I asked a couple of questions about it, what are you talking about. And a couple of fellows around there who were knowledgeable and had lived through this period -- and I was then not in the States, I was overseas -- told me that they had tried to do something -- at the White House request, incidentally -- they had tried to do something, but it hadn't worked, and that was it.

Senator Schweiker. Had you heard any talk about what role Bobby Kennedy did or didn't have in that situation?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes. What I was told -- and this was absolutely hearsay -- was that Bobby Kennedy was the one that was pushing for this, and that he was reflecting his brother's desires.

Senator Schweiker. Did he use a desk over at CIA Headquarters during this period?

Mr. Karamessines. Not to my knowledge -- I think I would have known if he had, but not to my knowledge. Remember, I was not in the building, I was overseas from 1959 to March 1962. So what was happening in that period I just don't know. He might have had a desk. But I never heard that. And I didn't know of it.

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Mr. Johnston. Were you aware that Harvey and Roselli met in June of 1963?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know the crypt AMLASH?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, I have seen it. I don't know whether I have seen it in Congressional reports or in the newspapers or in the office.

Mr. Johnston. In the fall of 1963 when you were serving as Mr. Helms' Assistant did you ever see any documents with the crypt AMLASH on them, any reports involving AMLASH?

Mr. Karamessines. I am sorry, but I simply cannot answer that question. I don't know. I may have, or I may not have. But there were thousands of crypts, and I couldn't possibly remember. And what AMLASH means right now I haven't the vaguest notion.

Senator Schweiker. The answer you gave a moment ago was as to the time frame when you learned about the assassination attempts relating to a column by Bill Harvey, the Army.

Mr. Karamessines. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. What year was that?

Mr. Karamessines. That must have been around -- my best recollection would have been about 1964, somewhere in there, late 1963, 1964, or maybe even 1965.

Senator Schweiker. It wouldn't have been the Jack Anderson 1967 story, would it?

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Senator Schweiker. I don't remember whether Harvey's name was in that or not.

Mr. Karamessines. It might have been, but it was a story in which Harvey was specifically mentioned by name.

Senator Schweiker. So prior to that time you had absolutely no knowledge about the assassination attempt?

Mr. Karamessines. That is right. This is one of the things I am very grateful about.

Senator Schweiker. In retrospect it was best not to have known?

Mr. Karamessines. I asked a fellow that used to work for me named Sam Halpern. And he chuckled and he said, look, you weren't around when it was all happening, you were overseas. But I was there when Bissell came back from talking with Bobby Kennedy. And he said it was a messy business. And he said, when you came back and you were made a DP everybody agreed that we wouldn't tell you about these things, because, he said, you are the kind of fellow that would have either left or raised holy hell about it.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware, then, of the meetings that were taking place in the fall of 1963 between CIA case o-ficers and the high level Cuban whose code name was AMLASH, whereby he was proposing the overthrow of Castro, and soliciting US support for him?

Senator Schweiker. I would like to qualify that a little

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bit, in view of your other answer, in terms of overthrowing Castro as opposed to assassination, because apparently both elements were involved.

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, I understand.

Senator Schweiker. Would one have come to your attention?

Mr. Karamessines. One might have come to my attention as a DP, yes. But AMLASH, what was he, a Cuban? I don't remember.

Mr. Johnston. Let me mention his name off the record.

Senator Schweiker. Let's go off the record a moment.

(Off the record discussion.)

Mr. Johnston. Back on the record.

Mr. Karamessines. I had heard about him, but I wasn't running him. He was being run by the Cuban Task Force.

Senator Schweiker. That would have been Special Affairs Section that you were talking about?

Mr. Karamessines. Right.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware that meetings were taking place in the fall of 1963?

Mr. Karamessines. I would have assumed at the time that we ere in touch with somebody like that, yes.

Senator Schweiker. In other words, they were going along regularly as a matter of policy?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes. And I knew that we were trying to put agents into Cuba, drop men by air, put them in by boat,

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and try to recruit people within the Cuban Government. And this was for intelligence information, and to see whether there was any possible hope for restirring and reagitating and getting another indigenous revoting.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know that Mr. Fitzgerald had flown to meet with AMLASH and to assure him that his proposed overthrow of Castro which he, AMLASH, included in the assassination of Castro, had full US support, were you aware that Fitzgerald had done that?

Mr. Karamessines. Not at all.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware that on November 22nd the case officer offered AMLASH a poison pen or some kind of poison device?

Mr. Karamessines. No. I have heard of that in connection with publications in the papers subsequent to the inquiries of the Senate. But I did not know of anything like that, I was not kept posted on anything like that.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of a Cuban policy review within CIA in early December 1963?

Mr. Karamessines. We had Cuban policy reviews from time to time in the Agency. The one that I am most aware of is the one in which I urged that we get the Forty Committee to allow us to wrap up this Cuban program, because the budget couldn't take it, and we weren't accomplishing a thing but a waste of time and effort. And I ordered written and sanctioned

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the papers that were written and present-d the papers down at the Forty Committee. And the best we could get out of it was that we could get rid of some of the ships and reduce some of the expenses, but we were instructed to maintain a standby capability anyway. And all of this must have taken place about the middle of 1960s, 1963, 1966, it was before I became DDP in 1967. But I don't have any specific recollection of a policy review in December 1963.

Mr. Johnston. And you don't associate -- you had no knowledge of a Cuban policy review that you would associate with the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Karamessines. No, no recollection -- I don't want to say no knowledge, because you could produce something that shows that I knew about such a thing. I just don't recall any such.

Mr. Johnston. You were aware of the JM Wave Station that existed?

Mr. Karamessines. In Florida, absolutely. I visited it once on a brief trip to Miami.

Mr. Johnston. And did you know of Oswald's possible connections with the Cuban groups, that he was a member of the Fair Play for Cuba?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I didn't know about that until after the assassination had taken plsce and the newspapers printed up a lot of stuff about Oswald and the Fair Play

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1 Committee, and I saw some of the material that the Bureau had
2 that we had on Oswald, I learned about it then, yes.
3 Mr. Johnston. Did you ever recall any orders being
4 given to the Wave Station in Florida to use their sources to
5 assist the investigation of the Kennedy assassination?
6 Mr. Karamessines. After the assassination had taken
7 place?
8 Mr. Johnston. Yes.
9 Mr. Karamessines. To assist in the investigation of it?
10 Mr. Johnston. Yes.
11 Mr. Karamessines. It wouldn't surprise me that such
12 orders were given. But I don't recall it. It would have been
13 appropriate to have asked them some questions about it if they
14 could be responsive. There may have been questions about the
15 local Cuban community with which Oswald might have been in
16 touch, in view of this fair business.
17 Senator Schweiker. If they did in fact do that which
18 flow of command would that have come from probably?
19 Mr. Karamessines. That would come up on the Special
20 Affairs Staff.
21 Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of a relationship between
22 the CIA and US customs agents in Florida in 1963?
23 Mr. Karmessines. I knew that the CIA had working
24 relationships with Immigration and Nationalization customs,
25 the FBI, and I don't know who all else, in Florida, in

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connection with the Cuban refugee wituation, I knew that.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of it going farther than that with regard to customs to the extent that the customs agents were detailed to CIA operational use?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I don't recall it.

Senator Schweiker. Or that they were using customs cover for the CIA agents?

Mr. Karamessines. That would not surprise me. I didn't know it at the time, but if somebody told me that we were using customs covers for some of our agents with customs permission, that would not have surprised me. But I don't recall knowing it at the time. We were using various covers.

Senator Schweiker. I asked you about David Phillips. Did he work under your operations in any form when you were --

Mr. Karamessines. When I was DDP David Phillips was in charge of our Chile operation. And he was in charge of the Chili Task Force in the DDP.

Senator Schweiker. Were there any other operations besides Chile that he worked for under you?

Mr. Karamessines. Well, he served in Latin America in a variety of poses, and he served in the Latin American Division here in Heqdquarters, the Western Hemisphere Division. But we never worked together closely.

Senator Schweiker. Were tbere any Cuban responsibilities that he had that you are aware of?

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Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall any.

Mr. Johnston. Did you discuss with Mr. Helms or anyone else the decision to make the CI Staff the point of contact of the liaison with the Warren Commission?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall such a discussion. It may have taken place, but I have no recollection of it. But making the CI Staff a point of contact for the Warren Commission would have been a perfectly natural thing to do.

Mr. Johnston. And you have talked about it previously. But why was it?

Mr. Karamessines. The reason that it would have been the natural thing to do was because this matter, the assassination of the President, concerned primarily the FBI, the Secret Service and other agencies having a plain undisputed unambiguous domestic security responsibility, and the Secret Service of course, having the explicit responsibility for the protection of the President. And we were organized in the DDP so as to concentrate or focus our liaison activities with the agencies I have just mentioned in the CI Staff. So that seems a very natural place in which to vest this reponsibility.

Mr. Johnston. But that left a hole from the CIA standpoint because of the SAS counterintelligence being separate from the CI Staff?

Mr. Karamessines. Not necessarily. Because the CI Staff, as a senior staff, had responsibilities which transcended

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any of the divisions or the SAS.

Senator Schweiker. But wouldn't SAS have been the more logical connecting point, because of the dealings with both the pro and anti Castrol groups, in view of Oswald's connection first with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and second, with allegedly some of the anti Castrol Cubans?

Mr. Karamessines. Not really, because SAS's expertise on any of this would have stopped dead after the first name or two. It was the CI Staff that had the counterintelligence files which would support the extensive investigation which was conducted. SAS could never have done it because it didn't have the files with which to do it. It wasn't its responsibility.

Senator Schweiker. But Jim Angleton comes in and tells us just about the same story that you are telling us, which was the compartmentation they had, and the Cuban activities per se really weren't under his province, they were over at SAS?

Mr. Karamessines. Cuban activities, that is correct. In other words, the Cuban activities means the conduct of operations again Cuba largely, that is what it means. And these operations were being conducted out of SAS largely, to a smaller extent the WH Division, but largely SAS. Angleton was right.

Senator Schweiker. But it almost looks as if whoever

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1 set up that structure really didn't want to have any communica-
2 tion with Cuban activities and the Warren Commission.
3 Mr. Karamessines. No, I think that is absolutely wrong,
4 and I don't agree with that. I think you are wrong to believe
5 that.
6 Senator Schweiker. But they would have had the most
7 intimate knowledge of the very thing here that we flash as a
8 top secret message: "Arrest of Sylvia Dura is extremely
9 serious matter which could prejudice freedom of action on
10 entire question of Cuban responsibility." Who would know that
11 but SAS, and why not plug SAS into it?
12 Mr. Karamessines. But that didn't come from the CI
13 Staff, it came from the Western Hemispher Division.
14 Senator Schweiker. I understand. But here is the top
15 priority at that point in that particular connection. My
16 only point was that since it was top priority message that
17 the best way to give the Warren Commission the knowledge it
18 needed to pursue in whatever way it might lead would have been
19 to have a pipeline to SAS. But from what we can find out no
20 such pipeline existed to the Warren Commission from SAS, in
21 fact if anything, there was a closed door between the SAS
22 and the Warren Commission. And Angleton keeps coming up with
23 -- and I believe him -- the same kind of answers you are
24 giving, well, I didn't know, and we didn't communicate, and
25 you will have to talk to them. So that the one logical and

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most urgent top priority information was denied to the Warren Commission.

Mr. Karamessines. The SAS, if thqt is what you are focusing on, SAS's charter, if that is what you mean, I don't know when they were put into business as SAS. For a long time it was known as the Cuban Task Force W, that is it. And later they were called SAS. I don't know when they were created, or when they became one or the other. But I do know this, that their responsibility was the conduct of what you might call offensive operations against Cuba, intelligence and action operations against Cuba. And that was their charter.

The President was assassinated by a fellow who has some contact with the Fair Play Committee in Miami, and he is in touch with the Cuban Consulate in Mexico, and he is a former Marine. I don't see how that would tie in with SAS at all, in the absence of some indication that there was a tieup. But I don't see the connection at all. And therefore I don't see why one would get concerned about SAS not having been paraded up to appear before the Warren Commission.

And I will tell you this. My clear recollection is that there wasn't anything that we could provide the Warren Commission as far as we were concerned that we didn't provide, anything we were asked for, everything we could put in.

Senator Schweiker. Knowledge of the assassination attempts against Castro?

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Mr. Karamessines. I didn't know about that. And I am not sure that that would have changed matters any, really.

Senator Schweiker. Well, hypothetically it was certainly one of the most logical motivation factors to have pursued as an investigative unit.

Mr. Karamessines. I suppose. But in any case, any information the Warren Commission asked for, or any of the other agencies asked for they got, and I think the record will show that they got in spades. I took the Warren Commission down to the Registry of our building and explained to the Chief Justice and to several members of the Commission how it was that we were able to report as promptly as we reported on Oswald being in touch with the Cuban Consulate in Mexico whenever it was, September or October. And he couldn't understand how we could have gotten that report out so quickly. And I showed him how it is done automatically with the machines, and so forth.

Senator Schweiker. One of the Senators asked Director Helms when he was before the Committee why he didn't provide the Warren Commission with information about the assassination attempts against Castro. And he said he wasn't asked. I don't quite reconcile that with what you are just telling me, although I know you can only speak for yourself, obviously. But it just strikes me as peculiar that a key question like that was a matter of being asked. So that is why I think there is a gap with the SAS Section here. If they are the ones that are

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1 counterattacks against Cuba, they are dealing with both the
2 pro-Castro Cubans and the anti-Castrol Cubans. Here is a guy
3 that allegedly had some tie with the pro-Castro Cubans. What
4 better source of information than SAS? In fact they are the
5 only source. And Angleton said he had virtually no source,
6 and the FBI had very little. So the only people with a
7 knowledge was SAS and they never plugged into the Warren
8 Commission. That is the problem that is a pecular thing.
9 Mr. Johnston. You were not aware of that problem at the
10 time?
11 Mr. Karamessines. I still don't consider it as a
12 problem. But I was not aware of it at the time as a problem
13 or otherwise. Any information that SAS might have had was
14 not locked off somewhere in another building with no allowed
15 access or anything like this. It was there, Angleton, I, the
16 Director, anybody, you know, could check names -- and names
17 were checked against their files continually. And this guy's
18 name, the information on Fair Play for Cuba and all that
19 business that we had, I will bet you money came from SAS's
20 files very likely. You see what I mean? This was accessible.
21 The only question you are raising is, why didn't somebody go to
22 the Warren Commission -- and that somebody should have been
23 SAS -- and tell the Warren Commission, you know, we tried to
24 kill Castrol a couple of years ago or last year, or whatever
25 it was. Isn't that what you are asking? I can't answer that

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1 Question.

2 Senator Schweiker. In other words, that is really the

3 question. And the reason you can't answer it is that the

4 Warren Commission didn't know enought to ask the question.

5 You have Commissioner Dulles in there who instigated some of

6 these plots in 1959, and then Director Helms coming before

7 and not volunteering information.

8 Mr. Karamessines. I can't answer that question. But

9 I can assure you that SAS was not being kept locked up in the

10 back room somewhere, their files were not being sequestered

11 from the Warren Commission or anything like that, if you think

12 you are making a point.

13 Senator Schweiker. I see your point.

14 Mr. Johnston. How do you know their files weren't being

15 sequestered?

16 Mr. Karamessines. Well, I know whetnever we needed to

17 get a run on any Cuban name or whatever, it would have been

18 run through their files, our Central Registrar, WH Division,

19 a check -- in other words, there would be a three or four way

20 check. And I remember one of the complaints at the time from

21 several of the people was, well, you have got to check this from

22 three or four different points to make sure you have covered

23 all the bases.

24 Mr. Johnston. Are you aware that at least one of their

25 files had a notation on it, do not remove from that office?

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Mr. Karamessines. Lots of files have notations like that.

Mr. Johnston. Dated December 1963?

Mr. Karamessines. That doesn't mean anything to me. I wasn't aware of that. It doesn't mean anything to me, because there are lots of files that have a stamp on them which says, please don't take out of this office, you may consult them. That is not significant to me at all.

Senator Schweiker. That is a routine procedure, you say?

Mr. Karamessines. It is not a routine decision. But to me it doesn't have any special significance.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of the 1967 IG report on assassinations at the time it was being prepared?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not.

Mr. Johnston. Were you talked to by the Inspector General?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not, to my recollection.

Mr. Johnston. Were you informed about Mr. Helms meeting with the President on the report?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not.

Mr. Johnston. Do you know that there was such a meeting?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I did not. You are talking about a meeting between Mr. Helms and the President in 1967 dealing with assassinations?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

Mr. Karamessines. The answer is no.

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Mr. Johnston. Were you aware -- and again in 1967 you were Assistant Deputy Director for Plans, in the spring of 1967 --

Mr. Karamessines. I was ADDP, right. Mr. Fitzgerald was the DDP.

Mr. Johnston. And in August of '67 --

Mr. Karamessines. I became the DDP.

Senator Schweiker. Who was the top Assistant to Fitzgerald, who would have been right under Fitzgerald?

Mr. Karamessines. When he was DDP?

Senator Schweiker. No, when he was in charge of the special action.

Mr. Karamessines. The Cuban thing?

Senator Schweiker. Yes.

Mr. Karamessines. I can't remember. YOu can get it easily enough, but I just can't remember.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware in March and April of 1967 that the Inspector General's Office was conducting an investigation of assassinations?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not.

Mr. Johnston. And that they were talking to Mr. Fitzgerald, who was your boss?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of any information the FBI was receiving in 1967 regarding CIA assassination plots?

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Mr. Karamessines. No, I was not.

Mr. Johnston. You were out of that strema of communications altogether?

Mr. Karamessines. That is right.

Mr. Johnston. When you did become DDP did you then see the IG report?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I have not.

Senator Schweiker. They really compartmentalized that operation.

Mr. Johnston. Let me just once again recap: Were you knowledgeable of the course of the CIA investigation of the Kennedy assassination? You have indicated throughout your testimony today that you were kept abreast of those.

Mr. Karamessines. I was kept abreast of the activities that were taking place to support the investigation being conducted by the FBI and the Secret Service of the Kennedy Assassination. We were not conducting a separate, special investigation of the Kennedy assassination. But we were trying to get as much information as possible from our overseas posts that might throw any light whatever on who Oswald was and why he killed the President, and who put him up to it if somebody put it up to it. And I was fully familiar with the fact that we were knocking ourselves out trying to get to the bottom of those questions.

Senator Schweiker. In your recollection again, who

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1 headed that up with whom? In other words, who headed it up
2 within CIA?
3 Mr. Karamessines. The Counterintelligence Staff, I
4 believe. Everything was -- I don't want to use the word
5 focus --
6 Senator Schweiker. You are saying that SAS would have
7 plugged into them to the extent --
8 Mr. Karamessines. If they had anything at all to
9 contribute, number one. And number two, the CI Staff was
10 the senior staff and could have at any time have gone to SAS
11 and said, we want this and that and that, check your files and
12 give us this or that. They were the senior staff.
13 Mr. Johnston. Were you aware in 1963 --
14 Mr. Karamessines. Let me say one other thing. Mr.
15 Angleton very properly would say, SAS had its own thing, and
16 I didn't have much dealing with SAS. He didn't. He is sitting
17 up here somewhere. But Mr. Angleton doesn't always know what
18 the eight or one guys under him or doing, SAS and all these
19 others. But then thing float up to him. And he gets a report,
20 let's say, on Oswald, or somebody. It doesn't say, we have
21 got this from SAS's files. He just sees a report, it came from
22 the files.
23 So I can't fault Angleton for feeling as he does.
24 Senator Schweiker. I am not faulting him.
25 Mr. Karamessines. But I do think that it is wrong to

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1 suggest that somehow SAS was something that we completely
2 sequestered in connection with this whole Kennedy assassination
3 business. Because it is not true.
4 Mr. Johnston. When we get to any questions we have
5 asked you today about SAS's role you have indicated that you
6 don't know what they did. You do know what the CI Staff did.
7 And you do know what the Western Hemisphere Division did. But
8 you have testified that you don't know what SAS did.
9 Mr. Karamessines. I did not say that I didn't know what
10 they did. What I did say was that I was certain that SAS
11 would have contributed from their files, or from agent contact
12 in Miami, to the effort that was being made. And this would be
13 true of any other of the operating divisions. We might have
14 had a reflection of some activity in Timbuktu, or in some
15 South American or African division.
16 Mr. Johnston. You have previously testifed that you
17 did not know about the meeting between Mr. Fitzgerald and
18 AMLASH.
19 Mr. Karamessines. I did not.
20 Mr. Johnston. And you said you did not know that on
21 November 22nd a CIA case officer met again with AMLASH and
22 showed him a poison weapon to use?
23 Mr. Karamessines. I did not, no knowledge whatsoever.
24 Mr. Johnston. Do you know whether there was any
25 investigation made connected with any relationship between

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1 the AMLASH operation and the assassination of President Kennedy?

2 Mr. Karamessines. No, I do not.

3 Mr. Johnston. Do you know of any talk as to whether

4 AMLASH may have been a provocation agent?

5 Mr. Karamessines. No, I do not. I have no recollection

6 of anything like that.

7 Mr. Johnston. Would it be a relevant inquiry?

8 Mr. Karamessines. Well, I don't know. I didn't know

9 all that much about AMLASH. I would have to know a lot more

10 about AMLASH and the details of that operation to be able

11 to respond to that question.

12 Senator Schweiker. Going back to the structure of

13 understanding your functional definition of flow of lines of

14 authority, JMWAVE, would that have been under you, or SAS,

15 or how would JMWAVE have tied into this functional breakdown?

16 Mr. Karamessines. JMWAVE was the Miami extension of

17 activity against Cuba headquartered in our Headquarters, which

18 took place -- in the Cuban invasion, you know, they had a

19 station down there, I don't know whether they called it JMWAVE

20 at that time or gave it some other name. But there was a

21 group down in Miami, in that area, two or three groups,

22 probably, when they mounted the Cuban invasion in the Bay of

23 Pigs in 1961. And there continued to be an installation, one

24 or more installations like that, in that area down there. And

25 at one point it was called JMWAVE, and at another point it may

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1 have been called something else. But this eas the forward base,
2 the forward operational base of a headquarters group in
3 Washington which at one point was called Task Force W, and
4 at another point was called Special Affairs Staff.
5 Senator Schweiker. So this was really an extension of
6 that you are saying?
7 Mr. Karamessines. That is right.
8 Senator Schweiker. In 1963 time frame, October, would
9 that have been exactly the picture pretty well then? Was
10 that the Special Affairs Staff, was that in operation?
11 Mr. Karamessines. Yes.
12 Senator Schweiker. So that would have been true. So the
13 overwhelming bulk would have come through SAS except for
14 coordination and some things that might have been done jointly
15 with a concurrent knowledge kind of thing?
16 Mr. Karamessines. You m-an from JMWAVE you are talking
17 about?
18 Senator Schweiker. Right.
19 The man in the picture at Mexico City, can you shed any
20 light on who that man in the picture was?
21 Mr. Karamessines. That was really a problem at the time.
22 I don't think we ever determined, did we?
23 Senator Schweiker. Nobody seems to know.
24 Mr. Karamessines. And then there was a lot of fuss
25 about a picture being provided by the Bureau -- that was a big

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goof-up. I don't recall the details of that one, but I do remember an awful lot of back and forth.

Senator Schweiker. That is where it was photographed. There is no problem on that.

Mr. Karamessines. That is right.

Senator Schweiker. It just struck me as unusual that we couldn't have ascertained who this guy was.

Mr. Karamessines. It isn't all that unusual, really.

Senator Schweiker. But you have a listening device inside you certainly could have figured out.

Mr. Karamessines. I know, but that didn't hear everything that went on everywhere.

Senator Schweiker. But you could have pretty well figured somehow what there was that day just in business transactions?

Mr. Karamessines. Not necessarily. Let's say it was a local agency of some kind, and he had instructions, and his instructions were, you go in and the receptionist will recognize you, you just walk right by her or him and walk down the hall and go in Room 407. We don't happen to have a listening device in 407, and he comes and goes and all we do is get a picture of him. We don't know who he is. Sometimes we can find out who he is by working with the locals. They will help us. Other times if he makes repeated visits, then you have got a chance to surveil him as he leaves and see where

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he goes and find out who he is. In this case we never did determine who that person was.

Mr. Johnston. A couple of final questions. And forgive me if I repeat, I am not sure whether we have got these on the record or off. Where there any written orders to conduct any kind of investigations into the Kennedy assassination that you are aware of?

Mr. Karamessines. If I say I don't recall any, I do not wish my answer to suggest that there weren't any. It simply means that I do not recall any. It is likely that there were, but I don't remember them.

Mr. Johnston. Any time did you receive an order from Mr. Helms or anyone else above you not to investigate a certain area or a certain question?

Mr. Karamessines. Never.

Mr. Johnston. That is all.

Senator Schweiker. That is all I have.

Mr. Johnston. He has never taken an oath.

Senator Schweiker. We will do the first thing last.

We appreciate your cooperation. And just for formality's sake we would like to swear you in.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you have given is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Karamessines. I do.

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Mr. Madigan. I have a few questions I wonder if we could put on the record, if Mr. Karamessines does not object to your leaving.

Senator Schweiker. I think I will run along.

Would you mind a few more minutes?

Mr. Karamessines. No, it is all right.

Mr. Madigan. It is kind of an adjunct to this AMLASH thing.

Mr. Karamessines. Okay.

Mr. Madigan. I want to ask you a few questions, Mr. Karamessines, about a couple of areas that are involved tangentially with the AMLASH situation, in that they take place in the same time period, the first of which is with regard to Howard Hunt. And as you may know, the Agency had been trying to determine for sometime what Hunt's assignment was in Spain in 1965, And that is the first area that I want to ask you about. And my first question would be, do you yourself know what Hunt was doing when he was assigned to Spain?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes.

Mr. Madigan. As background I might recall for you that he was as you know a staff employee up until June of 1965, when he was assigned on a contract basis over to Spain, until November of 1966, a 14 month period. And you were Assistant DDP, I think at the time.

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1 Mr. Karamessines. Mr. Fitzgerald had wanted us to have
2 an operational capability in Spain, divorced from, totally
3 divorced from, the official station in the Embassy. He
4 anticipated quite properly that one of these days Spain would
5 kind of begin coming apart at the seams with the death of
6 Franco, and that it would be necessary to have someone who knew
7 the language and who could get along with people, and who could
8 reasonably pass himself off as a retired former Service officer,
9 and one who could write, for example, as Hunt could write and
10 did write. And Hunt fitted the bill. And it coincided with
11 a period in time when Hunt's services weren't being, let's say,
12 eagerly sought in other parts of the Directorate. And this
13 seemed good solution. And he was sent to Spain for just that
14 purpose.
15 Mr. Madigan. And what was the purpose, to do what?
16 Mr. Karamessines. The purpose was to establish himself,
17 to fit into the community, and hold himself available for
18 operational tasks as they might be given him to do at some
19 point in time.
20 Mr. Madigan. Who did he report to?
21 Mr. Karamessines. He would report back to the offices
22 of DDP.
23 Mr. Madigan. Did he report to someone in particular?
24 Mr. Karamessines. Yes, he reported to the DDP and to me.
25 Mr. Madigan. The DDP, then, would be Mr. Helms?

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Mr. Karamessines. No, Mr. Fitzgerald.

Mr. Madigan. Mr. Helms was then --

Mr. Karamessines. In 1965 to 1969 Mr. Helms was Deputy Director of Central Intelligence.

Mr. Madigan. Now, did Hunt during that period have any association with ARTIME to your knowledge?

Mr. Karamessines. During that period of time? I don't know. I just don't recall. I know others of our people did. But whether he did or not I don't recall.

Mr. Madigan. Were you aware that they were close friends at the time?

Mr. Karamessines. I didn't know the Cubans all that well. I do know that Hunt was very active in the invasion of the Bay of Pigs thing in 1961. And I gather ARTIME was active in that also. So he would have known ARTIME very well, and he would have known a group of several others very well.

Mr. Madigan. What is your information or knowledge about Hunt's being in effect blocked for a position over there at that time by Woodward, who was then the Ambassador, because of prior problems in Montevideo? Does that ring a bell with you, or had you not heard of that?

Mr. Karamessines. I recall something like that, but I don't remember the circumstances and details of it. I can't throw any light on it.

Mr. Madigan. Did he file any written reports with your

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office?

Mr. Karamessines. Hunt?

Mr. Madigan. Yes.

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, he did. He sent in a paper to me from time to time.

Mr. Madigan. What do you know about his writing spy novels while he was over there?

Mr. Karamessines. He wrote a couple of them, which were checked by us at Headquarters before they were sent to the publishers.

Mr. Madigan. Was that part of the reason he was sent over there?

Mr. Karamessines. Yes, that was part of the reason he was over there. As I indicated earlier, he had a job of setting up out in the boondocks -- he would act as a retired Government Service fellow who was supplementing his income by conducting an active business which we could prove to the Spanish authorities if called upon to do so with a publishing firm, that he was writing novels, books. And he did indeed do that. And he wrote several books. I don't know how many he wrote while he was in Spain. He may have written one or two.

Mr. Madigan. I think three.

Is that a normal practice with regard to the Agency?

Mr. Karamessines. No, it is not, because we don't have

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that many publishable novelists onboard. But it is a good cover, and you can use it, I mean you can use it palpably and plausibly.

Mr. Madigan. The documents at the CIA indicate that normally the cover relationship such as that would involve the man receiving a certain salary, and just as if you had a cover entity, the profits or whatever from his enterprise would go back to the Agency, whereas in this case Hunt received all the royalties himself. Is there some particular reason for that?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I don't recall what the arrangements were. But I think the understanding was that if there were any royalties of any significance we would talk about how they should be split up.

Mr. Madigan. The documents also indicate that he had done some writing for Allen Dulles, and that this was sort of a promise that had been made that he would be allowed to go abroad and write books.

Mr. Karamessines. I am not familiar with that.

Mr. Madigan. You never heard of that?

Mr. Karamessines. No, I am not familiar with that.

Mr. Madigan. Was his assignment over there in the general course -- did everyone or the key people know about it, or was it some special assignment that only yourself and a few people knew?

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Mr. Karamessines. We kept it as quiet as we could keep it, for obvious reasons.

Mr. Madigan. Did he do any work with the [redacted] people?

Mr. Karamessines. No. We tried to keep him away from the [redacted] people.

You are talking about officials of the [redacted] is that what you mean?

Mr. Madigan. What about the opposition, the underground?

Mr. Karamessines. No, he was not instructed to go out and seek contacts, he was instructed to hole himself ready to serve as a servicing depot, a safe house, an intermediary, if we wanted him to be an intermediary, or if a station spotted certain situations in which it could not act but had to have somebody outside who could act, so that it wouldn't rub off on the station, he would be available for that kind of task.

Mr. Madigan. The [redacted] over there at the time indicates that Hunt never did any operational assignements for him.

Mr. Karamessines. That is correct.

Mr. Madigan. So these theoretical items that you listed, such as providing safe house, and so on, he never did any of those?

Mr. Karamessines. No sir. The occasion didn't arise where he was called upon to do it. But he was put in place

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1 so that he would be available to do them if the situation arose.
2 And Mr. Fitzgerald felt very strongly that the Spanish
3 situation was going to develop faster actually than it developed
4 in the event.

5 Mr. Madigan. There are quite a few Agency documents
6 that contain the opinion that, as you may know, the Agency
7 looked into this matter and found that there was no operational
8 purpose for him being over there, and that he was simply over
9 there to write spy novels to increase the image of the Agency.

10 Mr. Karamessines. Well, that would come from individuals
11 who hadn't directly heard from Fitzgerald. I did. At the
12 time of Fitzgerald's encumbacy he had studies made, and they
13 were available at the Agency, and this was very far sighted
14 of him. Several of us felt that we ought to do this and
15 studied matters on the suggestion of situations and what we
16 would be confronted with as a Government and as an [redacted]
17 [redacted] about eight or
18 10 or 12, areas. And [redacted] was practically at the top of the
19 list. He felt pretty strongly about it, and he felt this
20 would be one move where we would begin positioning ourselves
21 for the eventuality.

22 Mr. Madigan. What was the reason, then, that he was moved
23 out of there after a year?

24 Mr. Karamessines. I think he wanted to come home, he
25 got tired of it and wanted to come home, if I recall

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1 correctly. I don't remember now.

2 Mr. Madigan. Let me ask you some questions on another

3 matter. And that is about a fellow by the name of Jack

4 Valenti. And you may have covered some of these in your

5 questioning. Did you have any knowledge while you were at the

6 Agency of any dealings that the Agency had with Jack Valenti?

7 Mr. Karamessines. None whatever. You mean Jack Valenti

8 in the White House?

9 Mr. Madigan. In the Motion Pictures?

10 Mr. Karamessines. None whatever.

11 Mr. Madigan. Do you know of any involvement between

12 the Agency and Valenti concerning the assassination of

13 President Kennedy?

14 Mr. Karamessines. None whatever, no information, no

15 knowledge --

16 Mr. Madigan. No meetings?

17 Mr. Karamessines. No. What are they? I am curious.

18 Mr. Madigan. These are just a bunch of random questions

19 I have. I am trying to complete our record here.

20 In 1971 and 1972 periods do you have any dealings with

21 Cuban exile activities in Costa Rica in the DDP?

22 Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall any. But we may have

23 had. You don't mean personally, do you, you mean the DDP?

24 Mr. Madigan. Do you have any knowledge of any generally?

25 Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall any myself.

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1 Mr. Madigan. Do you ever recall being advised of or
2 learning of an effort in Florida to recruit people for Costa
3 Rican exercises under the guise of the Agency, some people down
4 there who were claiming to be representatives of the CIA when
5 in fact they weren't, having to do with the Cuban exile
6 movement in Costa Rica?
7 Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall.
8 Mr. Madigan. Jumping back to the '65-'66 Spain period,
9 did you have any involvement yourself, or to your knowledge
10 did anyone in the DDP have any involvement with this fellow
11 that I mentioned earlier, Manuel Artime?
12 Mr. Karamessines. I never knew the man, never met him,
13 so I didn't have any involvement with him. And I can't tell
14 you now who in the DDP actually worked with him or handled
15 him or saw him or dealt with him. You mentioned earlier that
16 Hunt did, and I am quite sure that he did. I wouldn't be
17 surprised if Fitzgerald didn't know him pretty well, because
18 Fitzgerald had been intimate with Cuban activities.
19 And there would be a number of other DDP officers dating back
20 from the time of the Bay of Pigs situation and before who
21 would have been ware of Artime or might have worked with him
22 or handled him. But I never did.
23 Mr. Madigan. Did you ever know --
24 Mr. Karamessines. I wasn't in the States during that
25 period, remember that, I was overseas.

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1 Mr. Madigan. '65 and '66?

2 Mr. Karamessines. No, I am talking now about the Bay

3 of Pigs period, when Artime and all the rest of these guys

4 came out of the woodwork, and that is how they came on the

5 blitzkrieg. I wasn't one of the fellows available to be in

6 touch with Artime.

7 Mr. Madigan. But you were in the DDP in the '65-66

8 period?

9 Mr. Karamessines. Yes, I was in Headquarters then, yes.

10 Mr. Madigan. Have you any knowledge whatsoever about

11 an effort to try to promote the Agency's image by having some

12 of these novels Hunt wrote made into motion pictures and

13 television shows?

14 Mr. Karamessines. There was a lot of thought going to

15 trying to push some of these CIA novels of Hunt's. But

16 nothing ever came of it as far as I know. I believe Mr.

17 Helms or somebody up the line decided against it.

18 Mr. Madigan. And you didn't have any personal dealings

19 with him?

20 Mr. Karamessines. No sir, I did not.

21 You mean did I deal with the motion picture people?

22 Mr. Madigan. Or the TV people?

23 Mr. Karamessines. No sir, I did not.

24 Mr. Madigan. What time frame do you place it in your

25 recollection hearing about this?

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Mr. Karamessines. I guess it would have been '65-66, in there somewhere.

Mr. Madigan. How about '72, that late?

Mr. Karamessines. I don't recall anything in '72 on that, no sir. If something happened, I don't remember it. I certainly never went around and tried to get anything like that put into moving pictures. There would be speculation once in awhile that the Director or something would say, the Bureau does it, the Defense Department does it, and maybe we ought to crank up a program or something like that. And Hunt used to think that this would be a good idea. And whether he was in touch with some people or not I just don't remember now. He may well have been.

Mr. Madigan. How do you know that Hunt thought it was a good idea? Did he talk to you about it?

Mr. Karamessines. Sure, absolutely.

Mr. Madigan. That is all.

Mr. Johnston. That is all. thank you.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded at 4:25 p.m.)

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