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The United States Senate

Report of Proceedings

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BY BC

Hearing held before

Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental

Operations With respect to Intelligence Activities

The Department of State has no objection to the release or declassification of this document in full under the provisions of the JFK Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 (PL102-526)

Reviewed on 8/12/98 mgr

Wednesday, September 10, 1975

Washington, D.C.

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

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

- - -

Wednesday, September 10, 1975

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:20 p.m., in Room 608, Capitol Hill Hotel, Senator Gary W. Hart presiding.

Present: Senator Hart of Colorado (presiding).

Also present: Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr., Chief Counsel; Curtis R. Smothers, Minority Counsel; Frederick Baron, Rick Inderfurth, Paul Wides, Rhett Dawson and Joseph DiGenova, Professional Staff Members.

- - -

Senator Hart of Colorado. Mr. Bissell, will you stand and be sworn.

Do you swear that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr Bissell. I do.

Senator Hart of Colorado. The same circumstances apply as applied under your previous experiences before the Committee. You have the right under our rules to have a member of the Committee present at all times if you choose. And you have also your Constitutional right to counsel if you so choose. You do understand?

Mr. Bissell. I understand.

Senator Hart of Colorado. We will be under way now.

Mr. Baron. You are appearing here voluntarily today without counsel?

Mr. Bissell. I am.

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TESTIMONY OF RICHARD N. BISSELL

Mr. Baron. Mr. Bissell, since we have talked with you last about the subject of the Congo we have taken testimony from a number of witnesses. The first that we would like to turn to is Bronson Tweedy, who in 1960 and 1961, as I am sure you will recall, was the Chief of the African Division. He indicated to us in his testimony that he had a number of talks with you, probably in the summer or fall of 1960, where the prospect of assassinating Lumumba was raised.

What can you tell us about those discussions?

Mr. Bissell. I am afraid I can't tell you anything. I don't remember the specific discussions with him. It seems to me, however, entirely to be expected that such conversations took place. I think I testified previously, but in any case, I remember assigning Justin O'Donnell to study the possibilities and to make plans for the assassination or elimination of Lumumba. And since that was in the Africa area, I think it most unlikely that I would have done that without saying something to the Division Chief about it.

Mr. Baron. Mr. Tweedy's testimony was to the effect that he was in fact not being informed of some on-going operation or some instruction that was contemplated, but rather that you and he were discussing the feasibility of assassinating Lumumba.

Did such discussions take place?

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Mr. Bissell. I don't happen to remember them, but it seems to me entirely probable that they did. And if he said so I would certainly accept that.

Mr. Baron. And would you assume that if such discussions took place they would have taken place in the summer or fall of 1960?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Baron. Would such discussions have involved planning for an actual assassination mission?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, planning for, but not necessarily any authorization to take specific steps to implement such a plan.

Mr. Baron. Would planning discussions in the sense that you are using the term included sending instruments of assassination to the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. They might have, although again I don't happen to remember that. I am aware, I think, that there is a record that something was said, but I had no recollection that things went that far. But that still could have been included in what I mean by the term "planning and preparing".

Mr. Baron. Did you give Mr. Tweedy any specific instruction as to steps he was to take to further a plan to assassinate Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I may have. I don't remember them. The

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only clear recollection I have is of what I think was the initial discussion on this matter that I had with Justin O'Donnell. And I believe that he and I had that alone, in other words, that Mr. Tweedy was not present in the discussion I had with O'Donnell.

Mr. Baron. We will turn later to filling out the details of your conversation with Justin O'Donnell.

For the moment, sticking with Mr. Tweedy's testimony, he also testified that during this same period of time he composed cables that went to the Chief of Station in Leopoldville inquiring at to if the Chief of Station could gain access to Lumumba for the purpose of assassinating him.

Did you send such cable?

Mr. Bissell. I would think the record would show whether they were sent. If they were wsent the record would presumably also show if I signed them. And I expect that if they were sent I would have signed them. But I don't happen at this distance in time to remember the specific cables.

Mr. Wides. If you had sent cables of that kind, Mr. Bissell, would they have gone in the normal channels out from the African Division, or might they more likely have gone on a restricted basis from yourself to the Station Chief without --

Mr. Bissell. I think it is very probable that it would

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have been the latter, although given the fact of conversations with the Division Chief, presumably he would have been on the distribution for these cables. But probably it would have been restricted to the Director or the Deputy Director or the Division Chief, and probably Mr.Helms'Deputy.

Mr.Baron. It was Mr. Tweedy's testimony that although he composed such cables, they went out, as far as he could recall, under your signature or from your office.

Mr. Bissell. That would be a very normal procedure.

Mr. Baron. Do you recall discussing with Mr. Tweedy the fact that he should write such cables, whether or not you recall the specific cables?

Mr. Bissell. I really don't.

Mr. Baron. Mr. Tweedy also testified that the cable traffic that he was sending to the Congo was part of a back and forth communication in which he was receiving information from the Chief of Station in Leopoldville about the kind of access that he could gain to Lumumba.

Did you read such cables from the Chief of Station in Leopoldville?

Mr. Bissell. I am sure I did. I don't remember it specifically.

Mr. Wides. Do you recall the question of access being one part of the exploration that you were doing?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, that indeed would have been a key

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part of it.

Mr. Wides. Do you recall that being so?

Mr. Bissell. I don't specifically recall it. But since I am clear that at least in the case of O'Donnell, and I now presume in the case of Mr. Tweedy, I authorized and indeed directed this planning and preparatory activity. A major part of this would have been a search for ways in which access could be gained.

Mr. Baron. And what kind of access were you looking for at that time?

Mr. Bissell. Obviously I would say the access of an individual who for one reason or another could get close to Lumumba.

Mr. Baron. In the summer and very early fall of 1960 this would have been access to Lumumba for the purpose of assassinating him rather than snatching him from U.N. custody?

Mr. Bissell. Well, it could have been for the purpose really of eliminating him from his then political activities. And that could have been assassination, or it could have involved some form of incapacitation, or it could possibly have been, in your words, snatching him so that he could be put into the custody of what we regarded as friendly authorities.

Mr. Baron. Would you have sought information from the Chief of Station on whether he could gain access to

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Lumumba for the purpose of poisoning Lumumba.

Mr. Bissell. It could very well have. That was one method of elimination, and that was obviously thought about at the time as part of the planning, and almost certainly we would have been in touch with the Chief of Station to see if he could gain access for that purpose.

Mr. Baron. Were you also in touch with the Chief of Station to seek access for the shooting Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I would guess that really the questions to the Chief of Station would have had to do with gaining access for whatever method -- an access that could be used for whatever method of eliminating Lumumba might be simple, practical and workable. And I doubt if the question would have been a different one, depending on the device or weapon to be used.

Mr. Baron. To retrace something you said a moment ago, if Mr. Tweedy had authored cables seeking information from the Chief of Station in Leopoldville about gaining access to Lumumba, you would have approved such cables?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, I would most certainly have.

Excuse me. Let me elaborate on that.

Given the procedures and relationships in effect, I think Mr. Tweedy, on the basis of an oral authorization from me, would have had the authority to send such a cable without my signing off on it. But in a matter of this sensitivity

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I think it highly likely that he would have drafted the cable, initialed it and sent it to my office for dispatch.

Mr. Baron. And you wouldn't dispute his testimony that he did so?

Mr. Bissell. Oh, no. His testimony seemed to me to be absolutely consistent with my recollections, which, alas, are somewhat inform. infirm?

Mr. Baron. Would your discussions with Mr. Tweedy have involved discussing the possibility of poisoning Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I suppose so.

Mr. Baron. We have also taken testimony from the man who was Chief of Station in Leopoldville during this period of time, from mid-summer of 1960 throughout 1961, and he testified--

Mr. Bissell. Would you remind me who it was?

Mr. Baron. Off the record for a moment.

(Discussion off the record.)

Senator Hart of Colorado. Back on the record.

Mr. Baron. While we were off the record we explained the arrangement under which the Chief of Station would testify before the Committee under alias. And we will refer to him here today as the Chief of Station, or by his alias, which is that of Victor Hedgman.

Mr. Bissell, when the Chief of Station testified before us he indicated that at some point in the late summer or early fall of 1960 probably toward the latter part of August

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or the very first days in September, he received a cable from CIA headquarters to the effect that a messenger will come to the Congo who you will recognize, and who will bring instructions which you are to carry out.

Did you send such a cable to the Chief of Station?

Mr. Bissell. I could have.

But I have perhaps a peculiar reason for questioning whether in this particular case I did. And my reason is the following.

You will notice that the cable you have just shown me that was sent out by the Director of Central Intelligence in late August, the cable was released by his initials. And it bears the notification that the only other distribution was to be to Mr. Helms, who was then, you will remember, Deputy -- my deputy.

Now, it is virtually inconceivable to me, given my knowledge of and involvement in this operation, that the Director would have sent a cable, denied circulation to me and had it circulated to Mr. Helms, if I had been in Washington. And I suspect that we could establish on the record that I was on vacation when the message you have shown me was sent.

Mr. Wides. That was in early August?

Mr. Baron. Let's introduce as Exhibit No. 1 for this session the document that you are referring to, which

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is a cable dated August 26, 1960, from Allen W. Dulles to Leopoldville. And this cable includes the paragraph:

"In high quarters here it is the clear-cut conclusion that if LLL continues to hold high office inevitable result will at best be chaos and at worst pave the way for Communist takeover of the Congo with disastrous consequences for the prestige of the U.N. and for the interest of the free world generally. Consequently, we conclude that his removal must be an urgent and prime objective, and that under existing conditions this should be a high priority of our covert action."

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 1 for identification.)

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Mr. Baron. Mr. Bissell, would LLL refer to Lumumba in this cable?

Mr. Bissell. I believe so.

Mr. Baron. And isn't it unusual that this cable bears the designation Allen W. Dulles as opposed to Director?

Mr. Bissell. That is unusual.

Mr. Baron. What does that signify?

Mr. Bissell. I believe this cable was drafted by the Director himself. That would be my inference from the format.

Mr. Baron. And does this appear to be Mr. Dulles' initials which are blurred in the copy we have?

Mr. Bissell. They may be there, but in any event, the releasing signiature is definitely his.

If I may complete the answer to your question, for the reason I have given you, my surmise is that I was not in Washington, and probably on vacation, when this was sent. I suspect that I might be able to dig out calendars and establish that if it became very germane.

If that is the case, it is quite possible that the cable you asked me about stating that a messenger would soon arrive in Leopoldville was sent also in my absence.

Mr. Baron. If such a cable was sent in your absence would you be apprised of it upon your return to headquarters?

Mr. Bissell. I suspect so, yes. In this case I would be almost certain that I would.

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Mr. Baron. And what would such a cable have referred to?

Mr. Bissell. Well, I suppose just what that said. Explicitly it refers, as you quoted, or characterized it, to a messenger with instructions to be followed.

Mr. Baron. And who was that messenger to be?

Mr. Bissell. I have no idea without digging back into the traffic.

Mr. Baron. And were those instructions related to the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. It certainly sounds as if they were related to his elimination in one way or another.

Mr. Wides. Why is that, Mr. Bissell?

Mr. Bissell. Just because the method of transmission is peculiar, and suggests high sensitivity. But it seems to me, on the basis of what you hve told me of the message, it can be only inference.

Mr. Baron. And one means of eliminating Lumumba contemplated at CIA headquarters at this time would have been an assassination?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Baron. In the testimony of the Chief of Station who was in Leopoldville at that time, he made the representation -- let me back track for a moment.

Did you ever discuss with [redacted] the assassination

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of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I think it is very probable that I did.

Mr. Baron. What would these discussions have involved?

Mr. Wides. Excuse me. Was [redacted] at that time science advisor to yourself?

Mr. Bissell. I believe he was. I would answer that question definitely if the record shows that he had not yet taken that position. But I am almost sure -- I had better not say that. Assuming that he had assumed the position of science advisor, I think that my answer would stand, that I very probably would have consulted with him.

Mr. Wides. For the record, while he was science advisor to the DDP, was he also an official of the TSD component, or was that a separate --

Mr. Bissell. No, he was not. His assignment to my office was his full time and sole responsibility.

Mr. Baron. And you say that you probably did discuss with [redacted] the assassination of Lumumba.

What would have been the substance of those discussions?

Mr. Bissell. It would have been discussing with him possible weapons or other means to use. When he was my science advisor, I frequently used him as in effect liaison with the Technical Services Division, the person who had been a member of it. And he knew the personnel and he knew a great deal about their programs. I presume that if I had

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had such discussions with him I would have been asking him to give thought to ways and means.

Mr. Baron. And you were asking [redacted] then, to think about the technical means by which an assassination could be carried out?

Mr. Bissell. Correct.

Mr. Wides. That is an assumption that you were, or can you recall now?

Mr. Bissell. No, it is an assumption -- it is an inference, if you like, from the circumstances. I think it is quite likely that I would have had such discussions with him assuming, as I believe to be true, that he was the science advisor at that time.

Mr. Wides. But you have no recollection?

Mr. Bissell. No.

Senator Hart of Colorado. Excuse me, Mr. Baron.

I am going to have to go to vote, and I would just like the record to reflect your acquiescence that there is no committee member here if in fact that is the case.

Mr. Bissell. I do so acquiesce, and I am happy to continue.

Senator Hart of Colorado. With that understanding you are willing to continue?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Senator Hart of Colorado. Thank you very much.

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Mr. Baron. Did you have any other kinds of discussions with [redacted] about the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. None that I remember.

Mr. Baron. Did you discuss with [redacted] your conversations with Justin O'Donnell?

Mr. Bissell. I just have no recollection of that.

Mr. Baron. Did [redacted] come to you and report to you on his conversations with Justin O'Donnell about the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. Again, I am sorry, I just have no recollection one way or the other.

Mr. Baron. Did [redacted] make you aware that he had in his shop, or he knew how to obtain the means to assassinate Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. Well, I certainly was aware in a general way that various means were available in the Technical Services Division. I don't know whether I obtained that information specifically from [redacted] but probably I did obtain some of it through him.

Mr. Baron. But however you obtained this information, you were aware that the means were available to assassinate Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I think you put it too specifically. I was aware that as part of it is on-going activity. The Technical Services Division did a lot of work in the develop-

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ment of various weapons of a sort appropriate for a clandestine service. And I was aware, I am quite certain, that these included poisons, type of firearms, and a whole range of capabilities. But my belief today, and my recollection, is that I was aware of these as the products, I repeat, of an on-going development program which itself was not targetted at any type individual or operation.

Mr. Baron. And with whom did you have discussions of technical means that might be used to assassinate Lumumba other than [redacted]?

Mr. Bissell. I do not know. I could have had with [redacted] whom I think was still the head of the Technical Division. I don't believe it would have been any but those two.

Mr. Baron. This would be [redacted]

Mr. Bissell. That is correct.

Mr. Baron. Did [redacted] express to you his reluctance to participate in an assassination plan?

Mr. Bissell. I don't ever remember his so doing.

Mr. Baron. Did [redacted] appear to be willing to see what he could do to obtain or develop the means to be used in such a plan?

Mr. Bissell. I really don't have any recollection that would enable me to answer that. I do believe that -- if he had demurred strongly, and urged its abandonment, or

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opposed it, I think it is likely that I would have remembered that position on his part, because I do remember very clearly Justin O'Donnell's reaction. And since I don't remember any such negative reaction from [redacted], my inference is that there probably was none.

Mr. Baron. The Chief of Station in Leopoldville at that time further testified to us that in very early September he received a visit from [redacted] in the Congo.

Did you sent [redacted] to the Congo at that time?

Mr. Bissell. Probably, if he went there, I certainly would have been fully knowledgeable of it.

Mr. Baron. And you would have approved his visit?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Wides. Particularly if this occurred when he was your science advisor.

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Wides. Is it correct that he would only have gone there pursuant to your direction?

Mr. Bissell. Correct.

Mr. Baron. What were [redacted] instructions, or what was his mission at that time?

Mr. Bissell. I do not know. I can draw inferences from the circumstances that have already been mentioned.

Mr. Wides. In the course of his duties as your science

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advisor, did he take frequent trips abroad?

Mr. Bissell. I would say infrequent. It seemed to me there were one or two others.

Mr. Wides. Would these trips be involved with highly sensitive operations as distinct from scientific evaluation?

Mr. Bissell. I believe that for the most part they would not have been involved with highly sensitive specific operations, but rather would have involved consultation with people in the field on the effectiveness of devices, techniques, procedures, underdevelopment in the Technical Services Division.

Mr. Wides. And given the unusual of his going to the Congo if he did in connection with clandestine operations there, you would have no recollection of that today?

Mr. Bissell. I don't have any recollection of that today, no. This is the first time I realized, since many years ago, that he had made such a trip.

Mr. Baron. Would he also have been aware that he had made such a trip?

Mr. Bissell. Well, the Chief of Station obviously, Bronson Tweedy, obviously. Quite probably the Director, but not certainly. And several others. I assume that Mr. Helms would have known about it at the time, because there would have been some kind of cable traffic, and I strongly

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suspect that [redacted] would have known about it.

Mr. Baron. Did [redacted] trip have anything to do with the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I don't know, since I don't remember the circumstances, I really can't say.

Mr. Baron. Would you assume that [redacted] trip have had something to do with the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I think it might very well.

Mr. Baron. And again we are talking about the plot to assassinate Lumumba rather than Lumumba's ultimate demise?

Mr. Bissell. Correct.

Mr. Baron. If [redacted] visit related to the plot to assassinate Lumumba, would such a sensitive operation have been made known to Bronson Tweedy?

Mr. Bissell. I believe so, specially in the light of the fact that apparently this possibility had been discussed with Bronson Tweedy more than once.

Mr. Baron. Is it possible that Bronson Tweedy would have been cut out of the actual mounting of an assassination operation despite the fact that the feasibility of an assassination had been discussed with him?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, it is possible.

Mr. Baron. Was that the case?

Mr. Bissell. I don't remember. But if you ask me to

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guess, I think I would -- I think my guessing would come down slightly on the side of his having been cut out rather than knowledgeable.

Mr. Baron. Why would that be?

Mr. Bissell. Well, I repeat, I am guessing about this, and the reasoning that leads me to make that remark is that my recollection is that my assignment to O'Donnell was very narrowly held. And I do not remember discussing that assignment with Bronson Tweedy. And so I think there is a real possibility -- and it is a guess, trying as best I can to reconstruct what was going on at the time, but not based on any recollection of actual discussions -- but my guess, as I say, would come down very slightly on the side that O'Donnell's assignment was not known to Bronston Tweedy, and that he, therefore, was cut out of this phase.

Mr. Baron. And would have been cut out of knowledge of [redacted] visit to the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. Could have been, although that is more unlikely. It seems to me that if he was being cut out of knowledge of the specific operation, that he would have had to be knowledgeable of the visit, and would have been given an explanation of the visit other than the postulated true explanation.

Mr. Baron. In the light of that, Mr.Bissell, is it likely that the cable traffic that Mr. Tweedy describes going

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back and forth between himself and the Chief of Station in the Congo concerning gaining access to Lumumba could have unbeknownst to him related to gaining access to Lumumba for the purpose of an assassination plot that was further along the line than Mr. Tweedy knew?

Mr. Bissell. It could have. I would put it another way. It seems to me that the information gleaned in that interchange was probably an input to the planning -- the preparatory activity that identify with O'Donnell.

Mr. Baron. To repeat for a moment, [redacted] visit to the Congo would have been known to the Chief of Station, yourself and Director of Central Intelligence, and possibly Bronson Tweedy?

Mr. Bissell. I think probably Bronson Tweedy, and almost certainly a few other people. I repeat, I think [redacted] would have known of it. I think Richard Helms would have knwon of it, and I think several others. I am making a distinction between those who would have known of the visit, an event that would not be easy to keep secret from a number of people in the Agency, and knowledge of the true purpose of that visit, if indeed its true purpose were, as was suggested.

Mr. Baron. Did you have any discussion with Richard Helms about the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I don't remember -- wait a minute. No,

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I believe I did not with Mr. Helms.

Mr. Baron. You paused for a moment there. Was there some discussion that you were thinking about that could have related to Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

I think what came into my mind was a later and subsequent conversation with Mr. Helms sometime after. And this had to do with O'Donnell, and I seem to remember Mr. Helms making a remark that he was a somewhat -- on occasion a somewhat unsable person. And at that point the subject may have come up with Mr. Helms. But my impression is that any such conversation with Mr. Helms was a good deal later.

Mr. Wides. Mr. O'Donnell indicated that after he spoke to you and told you that he would not participate in the assassination effort, that he went essentially nextdoor to your office, to Mr. Helms' office, and recounted his discussion with you to Mr. Helms.

Do you recall any discussion about that time that Helms might have come back to you to find out about?

Mr. Bissell. Let me explain, the dim recollection that I have just voiced of a conversation with Helms after the termination of O'Donnell's assignment, and Helms comment on it. But I still believe that Mr.Helms did not know of this until after what I would refer to as the termination of

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O'Donnell's involvement, which was the occasion you have just referred to.

Mr. Wides. It was not described by Mr. O'Donnell as the termination of an assignment.

Mr. Bissell. All right, that is my phrase, but as I have already testified, my recollection -- and it is recollection -- is that Mr. O'Donnell came in to me -- I thought it was a matter probably of at least several weeks, but I could be wrong on the timing -- after I had originally given him the assignment, and expressed both his personal reluctance to attempt to carry it out, and his belief that it was the wrong way to proceed. Whether he so stated to Mr. O'Donnell, it certainly was my decision at that time that it be dropped. And to the best of my knowledge and belief, no further action was taken.

Mr. Schwarz. By "it" in that example do you mean the assassination of Lumumba, or O'Donnell's involvement in the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. At any rate, O'Donnell's involvement, the project that he had been asked to plan and prepare for, that that would not be continued.

Mr. Baron. And that was the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. You mean one officer comes in and gives you a negative, and then you decided to turn off something

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that you had been looking into for weeks because one officer says he wouldn't do it?

Mr. Bissell. To turn it off, or at least if it be continued, to change not only the people connected with it, but probably the whole modus operandi. And the reason for that decision, insofar as I can recollect it, is, my grave concern that, given O'Donnell's reaction, there was a risk that the planning of such an operation would be blown.

Mr. Schwarz. You mean if it was done he would expose the conversation?

Mr. Bissell. Something of that kind could happen, yes.

Mr. Dawson. Who were you worried about O'Donnell in that case exposing it to? Certainly not the press.

Mr. Bissell. I can't recally answer that, except by surmise, but I do remember that this had been in my mind a very sensitive assignment to him, limited -- with the knowledge of it to be limited very narrowly even within the Agency. And it is difficult to separate recollection from inference on occasion. But I seem to recollect that after this conversation with him I wanted this put very much on the back burner and inactivated for quite some time.

Now, that doesn't rule out the possibility that some action through completely different channels might have gone forward. But the best of my recollection is, I viewed this

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not only as terminating the assignment for him, but also as reason for at least postponing anything further along that line.

Mr. Schwarz. Who had knowledge within the Agency of your assignment to O'Donnell and its true purpose.

Mr. Bissell. I would guess that --

Mr. Schwarz. Not guess, who did?

Mr. Bissell. I don't know. What I was going to say is that I think the Director did.

Mr. Schwarz. Guess, think, don't know. You have got to have a basis, Mr. Bissell, for testifying to something.

Mr. Bissell. All right.

The basis is, as has been in so much of my testimony, how business was conducted within the Agency at that time. There had been, as the Exhibit 1 cable suggests, there had already been consideration at high levels in the Agency and elsewhere of the elimination of Lumumba. Obviously I had been involved in conversations with the Director on that subject. Given the way business was conducted, I would infer that I would have told the Director of my assignment to O'Donnell.

Mr. diGenova. Mr. Bissell, you are telling us that you don't remember this, is that correct?

Mr. Bissell. That is right.

Mr. diGenova. You have seen this Exhibit No. 1 which says:

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"In high quarters here it is the clearcut conclusion that if LLL continues to hold high office inevitable result will be chaos".

And then it goes on and says:

"Consequently we conclude that his removal must be an urgent prime objective and that under existing conditions this could be a high priority covert action".

That is dated August 26, 1960, signed, according to your identification of his signature, by Mr. Dulles personally. And it follows by one day a meeting in the White House of the Special Group attended by the President of the U.S., where Dulles said he would proceed --

Mr. Baron. I don't think this meeting was attended by the President.

Mr. diGenova. Excuse me, attended by Mr. Dulles -- where he said he would proceed as vigorously as the situation permitted. And it was agreed that the planning for the Congo would not necessarily rule out consideration of any particular kind of activity which might contribute to getting rid of Lumumba.

Does that in any way refresh your recollection about what was happening at that time?

Do you remember anything independently of what Mr. Dulles was talking to you about? We had trouble areas in the world, including Cuba, and the African Continent in particular.

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Does that refresh your recollection in any way independently?

Mr. Bissell. Well, my recollection, I think, is pretty clear about the atmosphere at the time. And I think it is quite eloquently described in the cable which you have just quoted. And I have already said that I think probably, from the evidence of the format of that document, I was absent from Washington at the time when it was sent. But I certainly would have seen that when I returned, and it certainly would have been the subject of conversation between Dulles and myself. It is for that reason that I draw the inference that Justin O'Donnell's assignment would have been reported by me to Allen Dulles.

Mr. diGenova. But you personally don't remember discussing this with Mr. Dulles?

Mr. Bissell. No.

Mr. diGenova. You conclude now that you must have because of the physical evidence?

Mr. Bissell. Could I just interrupt for a moment to say, I used to see Mr. Dulles almost daily during these years. It was rare that we would meet without touching on perhaps severl on-going operations or plans or prospects. And this, over a period of several years. It is not, I think surprising that rarely have I been able in the course of my testimony to say, I specifically remember a particular meeting, and

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even roughly what was said of it.

Mr. diGenova. Mr. Bissell, that is somewhat important, obviously, because the idea is to try, if possible, to establish what the precise facts were.

Now, I am sure you don't mean to say that the assassination of a foreign leader blurs into the everyday activity of the Agency because it was so commonplace -- or is that what you mean to say?

Mr. Bissell. No, I don't. But I do mean to say that the Agency had put a top priority, probably, on a range of different methods of getting rid of Lumumba in the sense of either destroying him physically, incapacitating him, or eliminating his political influence. And a conversation about this particular facet of what was a many-sided attack on the problem doesn't stand out in my mind.

Mr. diGenova. What you are saying, then, is the details of any specific day or meeting or cable you don't recollect, but you don't have any trouble recollecting the fact that the assassination of Lumumba, among others, was part of a strategy at that time, if needed?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Baron. And that was part of a strategy at the level of the National Security Council as well as within the AGency?

Mr. Bissell. I believe that the language quoted would

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so indicate, yes.

Mr. Schwarz. Did you attend any meeting of the National Security Council?

Mr. Bissell. I don't remember any on this subject, and I don't think I did. I very rarely attended the NSC as such, or its so-called planning committee. Robert Amory was the agency representative on that, and I have already said -- well, I did not by any means always, I would say not more than half the time, attended Special Group meetings.

And since I also think I was out of town when that was sent, it seems to me highly unlikely that I was at the Special Group meeting the day before that cable was sent.

Mr. Baron. I think we should introduce for the record as Exhibit 2 the memorandum for the record of that Special Group meeting of August 25, 1960, which records Mr. Dulles being present, and does not list yourself as one of the participants. And it contains a paragraph substantially as Mr. diGenova related it where Gordon Gray, who was at that time Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, commented that his associates -- and we have testimony by Thomas Parrott, the Secretary who took these minutes, that Mr. Gray's associate was a euphemism to refer to the President.

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 2 for identification.)

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Mr. Bissell. Correct.

Mr. Baron. "Mr. Gray commented that his associates had expressed extremely strong feelings on the necessity for very straightforward action in this situation, and he wondered whether the plans as outlined were sufficient to accomplish this.

"Mr. Dulles replied that he had taken the comments referred too seriously, and had every intention of proceeding as vigorously as the situation permits or requires, but added that he must necessarily put himself in a position of interpreting instructions of this kind within the bounds of necessity and capability. It was finally agreed that planning for the Congo would not necessarily rule out 'consideration' of any particular kind of activity which might contribute to getting rid of Lumumba".

Then the next day after this meeting Mr. Dulles sends out the telegram or the cable that we have already discussed.

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Baron. Would you assume that Mr. Dulles'cable, which was sent to Leopoldville, was a direct outgrowth of this meeting that he had attended the previous day?

Mr. Bissell. Obviously, sir.

Mr. Dawson. Do you know?

Mr. Bissell. I think there is no question on the

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basis of the documents.

Mr. Baron. Do you assume that assassination was one of the means of removing Lumumba from the scene that is contemplated within the language of Mr. Dulles' cable?

Mr. Bissell. Correct -- and also the language reported in the minutes of the Special Group.

Mr. Baron. And that would be in essence language--

Mr. Bissell. Could I just interrupt to say in elaboration of that point, you may remember that I perhaps unfortunately used the word "circumlocutious" in earlier testimony to describe the way this kind of topic was discussed. This is a prime example of it. When you use the language that no particular means were ruled out, that is obviously what it meant, and it meant that to everybody in the room.

Mr. Wides. Meant what?

Mr. Bissell. Meant that if it had to be assassination, that that was a permissible means.

Mr. Baron. And that this was permissible in the eyes of the President, whose sentiments -- who was being represented at the meeting by Gordon Gray?

Mr. Bissell. At least permissible by his representatives sitting in the room. You don't use language of that kind except to mean in effect, the Director is being told, get rid of the guy, and if you have to use extreme means up to and including assassination, go ahead.

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Mr. Baron. And in effect the Director is being told that by the President?

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Baron. Through his representative?

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Schwarz. Did Mr. Dulles tell you that President Eisenhower wanted Lumumba killed?

Mr. Bissell. I am sure he didn't.

Mr. Smothers. Did he ever tell you even circumlocutiously through this kind of cable?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, I think his cable says it in effect.

Mr. Smothers. Was this a thing that was clearly understood here by everyone? What was that in your experince with the Agency that had prepared you to understand this kind of coded dialogue, if you will? Was assassination something that was discussed fairly often?

Mr. Bissell. No, I would say really very infrequently, very infrequently even discussed, let alone attempted. But I submit that the language just quoted from the minutes of the Special Group was not language internal to the Agency, it was language from a Cabinet level committee.

You may remember another document that was offered earlier in my testimony which was again minutes of a Special Group meeting, and it quoted Livingston Merchant, the State Department representative, again asking if there was no way to get

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rid of the Castro leadership in that case. I am sure you remember that document.

Now, when senior political officers meet in a Cabinet Committee, especially when some kind of a record is being kept, they do talk around a subject of that kind. But it doesn't mean that it is obscure or not understood by anyone there. I believe in both of these caees it is perfectly clear -- in the first Livingston Merchant case it is clear that he was raising a question at to whether physically getting rid of these people was possible, and in the second case, the one just quoted here, it seems to me that -- if you like to call it that -- the consensus of the Special Group was that "no means should be excluded in the effort to get rid of Lumumba".

And that, I repeat, is not CIA language. If it is gobbledegook it is on a good high level.

Mr. Dawson. Is Mr. Gray in this cable or memorandum for the Special Group on August 25, 1960, conveying the feeling of his associate, which we have identified clearly as President Eisenhower?

Mr. Baron. Moving back now to the testimony of the Chief of Station who was in Leopoldville in 1960, he said that shortly after he received this cable that a messenger would come whom he would recognize and who would give him instructions to carry out. He received a visit from Mr.

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[redacted] And we have discussed that visit. He then goes on to testify that [redacted] gave to him, or told him that he would very shortly thereafter receive, some lethal biological substances, and the tools for administering those substances, namely, a syringe, gauze masks, and rubber gloves. Were such lethal biological substances sent down to the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. I don't know. I assume the record shows one way or the other. I don't have a recollection of that. I was really rather surprised on the occasion of the earlier testimony to have it reported that they had been sent.

Mr. Baron. Would you assume now, hearing this testimony, that indeed such substances were sent to the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. I think what you have told me, repeating the evidence of the Station Chief, that [redacted] told him to expect that, is that correct?

Mr. Wides. The testimony is that the materials were brought by [redacted] or essentially arrived while he was there, and that he went over their use with the Station Chief. That doesn't refresh your recollection at all with regard --

Mr. Bissell. No, it doesn't. But I am sure if the Station Chief so testified it is correct, there is nothing in mind that I remember that would be in conflict with that.

Mr. Baron. It would not have been against the policy

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at that point for the AGency to have proceeded to the point of sending poison to the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. No, it would not.

Mr. Wides. You draw a distinction before between what you called the planning stage and the implementing stage. I take it it was not common to send lethal means by the use of such a highly unusual messenger to a foreign country and turn them over to a Station Chief as distinct from experimenting in the laboratory in Washington?

Mr. Bissell. The phrase I used, or tried to use, most of the time was the phrase of planning and preparation versus the phrase of implementation.

Mr. Wides. By implementation do you mean simply the actual commencement of --

Mr. Bissell. Of an active assassination, yes.

Mr. Bissell. I suspect,yes.

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Mr. Wides. Is it fair to say, then, that your dichotomy between planning and your use of the term implementation would mean that if -- let us take a different example -- a sniper rifle and special bullets were sent

to the city where they were to be used, and there was reconnaissance, and every step necessary to actually carry out the execution, that the implementation as far as your use of the material would not start until someone actually picked up the rifle and pointed it at him?

[redacted]

[redacted] I would say that as long as any weapon of any kind remained securely within the Agency's control, that you were still short of what I would call --

Mr. Schwarz. Doesn't that turn on the nature of the order to the Agency personnel who has them?

Mr. Bissell. It does, right.

Mr. Schwarz. In the Lumumba case, was the AGency person who had the lethal agents authorized to use them to kill Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. To that question I do not know the answer. Clearly the Station Chief had been not only authorized but

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encouraged, as we have developed -- as you have developed -- in this testimony to seek out individuals who might have close access to Lumumba for the purpose of hostile action against him. Clearly the Station Chief was then sent, or

[redacted]

presumably so that if and when an individual with suitable access and other appropriate circumstances materialized and authorization was given, if it was still required, the operation could proceed.

Mr. Baron. Let me see if I can refresh your recollection on that one point, whether authorization had been given. The Chief of Station testified that when [redacted] gave him poison or instructions in the use of poison, he also made it very clear that these were for the purpose of assassinating Lumumba, and that he should proceed to carry out the assassination of Lumumba if it were possible, that the use of poison was not a sine qua non to the assassination, if he could find another way to do it, that would be fine, but that it was clear that he was to proceed with an assassination operation if he could find a way to do it successfully.

Mr. Bissell. Accepting that testimony, then, the authorization was given.

Mr. Schwarz. But we are dealing with your testimony, Mr. Bissell. WE have his testimony, and your comments on his testimony doesn't add much to the record.

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Mr. Bissell. No.

Mr. Schwarz. Did you or anybody else, as far as you know, authorize him to do the act?

Do you recall any fact which bears upon that? Or is your mind ablank on that subject?

Mr. Bissell. I am afraid, as far as recollection is concerned, that my mind is a blank on that subject. I know the Committee doesn't find inference particularly helpful, but I would strongly infer in this case that such an authorization did pass through me, as it were, if [redacted] gave that firm instruction to the Station Chief.

Mr. Baron. You say passed through you. From what source would it have passed?

Mr. Bissell. From the Director. As I would reconstruct the sequence of events, the Director, after the meeting and the cable in late August, made it clear that this was to go forward -- to me that this was to go forward if and when feasible circumstances permitted it, and it was on that basis that I would have authorized [redacted] to deliver by word of mouth such instructions from the Station Chief. That is a highly unusual procedure, even in a sensitive matter of this sort.

Mr. Schwarz. What is unusual about it?

Mr. Bissell. That the authorization should have been by word of mouth rather than by cable. I don't mean a cable

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setting it forth in as many words, with you this would have been identified with a project name by this time, and it is most unusual that even with a highly sensitive project that the nature is known to very few, probably only to the Station Chief itself.

What I would have expected is an authorizing cable saying, implement project such and such.

Mr. Schwarz. But in the normal course of CIA assassination activity, if I may use that term --

Mr. Bissell. In the abnormal course.

Mr. Schwarz. -- you would have been instructed by Mr. Dulles to do something?

Mr. Bissell. Instructed or authorized.

Mr. Schwarz. And then you would have spoken to or cabled some other officer?

Mr. Bissell. Correct. And knowing [redacted] it is literally inconceivable to me that he would have acted beyond his instructions.

Mr. Baron. The Chief of Station, to be fair to his testimony, indicated that he was greatly surprised when he received such instructions, and he was doubtful about the practicality of pulling off such an operation, at the least he was convinced it would be difficult. But he did say -- he added that as a fairly junior Chief of Station he might have checked back before he could have mounted such an

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operation. But he added that he believed the assassination was expected of him, and he left [redacted] with the impression that he would proceed to try to perform such a mission.

Mr. Wides. He also cabled.

Mr. Baron. Now, the next step that the Chief of Station took after [redacted] departed from the Congo, according to his testimony, was to cable to headquarters for confirmation of such an extraordinary mission.

Did you receive such a cable from Leopoldville?

Mr. Bissell. The record would have to show that. I don't remember it.

Mr. Baron. The Chief of Station also testified that he shortly thereafter received confirmation back in cryptic fashion to the effect that he was to proceed with the instructions to carry out the instructions he had been given.

Did you sent such confirmation to him?

Mr. Bissell. I assume so, if the cable went out.

Mr. Baron. And that confirmation would have come from yourself directly as opposed to Bronson Tweedy or anyone else in the African Division?

Mr. Bissell. Probably.

But again, if you have that cable, the initials would show who signed off on it, and so on.

Mr. Schwarz. These cables have not been found.

Mr. diGenova. The Committee is making an effort to find

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them, and the AGency has not been able to produce them yet.

Mr. Bissell. If it is any help for me to say, this sounds highly likely as an account if it is established, as evidence seems to have established, that [redacted] brought such instructions, I would expect the Station to seek confirmation. And I would expect,given the background, that that confirmation would have been forthcoming. And I would also be almost certain that I would have signed off on such a cable, or signed such a cable, initialled it, even if it had been going to Mr. Dulles for final approval.

Mr. Baron. These events occurred in early September, which was prior to your conversations with Justin O'Donnell about the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Baron. So at that point an assassination mission had in effect been mounted in the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Baron. After you spoke with Justin O'Donnell, did you send a cable to Leopoldville to stand down the assassination mission?

Mr. Bissell. Again, I would have to go back to the record.

Mr. Wides. WAs it your testimony earlier that you have no recollection of discussing with [redacted] the possible assassination of Lumumba?

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Mr. Bissell. I thought I testified earlier this afternoon that I might well have discussed it with him, but I don't have a specific recollection.

Mr. Wides. Let me read you an excerpt from your testimony on June 11, where Mr. Schwarz was asking you about your conversation with Mr. O'Donnell, and your request that he investigate, in your words, the possibility of assassinating Lumumba. And then on page 54 -- we should mark this --

Mr. Schwarz. Just read it in.

Mr. Wides. "Did you tell him this in connection with making plans to go see the passer of the poison, [redacted]

"Mr. Bissell. I think I probably did."

Was that a recollection at that time that you had sent O'Donnell to see [redacted]

Mr. Bissell. No, I think that comes in the category of inference rather than recollection, because I don't remember specifically telling [redacted]

Mr. Wides. Or speaking to [redacted] explaining the possible means to O'Donnell?

Mr. Bissell. I don't recollect it.

Mr. Baron. In the testimony of the Chief of Station in Leopoldville he said that during his visit with [redacted] [redacted] as I have related, he was extremely surprised when he received these instructions. And the instructions were so specific that he wanted to be very sure that the authoriza-

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tion for this mission was equally as specific. And he probed [redacted] on the source of the authorization, and said -- something to the effect, who authorized this mission.

The answer was, it came from the top, or something to that effect.

And then the Chief of Station pushed on to pin it down. And the response he got from [redacted] was, something to the effect that --

Mr. Schwarz. Will you read the exact answer?

Mr. Baron. I will read you from Mr. Hedgman's testimony. At page 30, quoting from the testimony of the Chief of Station in the Congo at that point, testifying under the alias of Hedgman, the Chief of Station said:

"In essence I must have -- and again I am guessing as to what my wording was -- must have pointed out that this was not a common or usual Agency tactic, and I may have probably said that I had never heard of it being done -- which I had not, never in my training or previous work in the Agency had I ever heard any reference to such, in my recollection at least, such methods. And it is my recollection, I asked on whose authority these instructions were issued.

"Mr. Wides. And what did [redacted] reply?

"Mr. Hedgman. It is my recollection that he identified the President -- and I cannot -- the President of the U.S. -- and I cannot recall whether he said the President or whether

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he identified him by name".

Then the testimony proceeds to the bottom of page 31:

"Mr. Wides. Can you recall whether he said 'the President' or 'President Eisenhower'?

"Mr. Hedgman. I cannot recall whether he just said -- whether he said the President or whether he said President Eisenhower.

"Mr. Wides. But it was one of those two, is your best recollection?

"Mr. Hedgman. I would say almost certainly".

Further down the page Mr. Hedgman continues:

"I have tried to go back in my mind on that, and I think, I believe -- but again now this one is pretty loose in my mind -- it was something to the effect that the President had instructed the Director".

And then on page 33 Mr. Dawson says:

"You are not the least unclear whether or not you came away with a very clear impression that the President's name had been invoked in some fashion?

"Mr. Hedgman. Yes, I came -- certainly that is my recollection".

Did [redacted] make you aware at this point that he had made such a representation to the Chief of Station?

Mr. Bissell. I have no such recollection.

Mr. Baron. Was [redacted] authorized to make such

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a representation that the President of the U.S. had authorized the assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I can't answer that question. But what probably occurred was --

Mr. Dawson. Wait a minute. Let's not do it that way.

Is there any doubt that you would have undertaken -- assuming that you did so instruct [redacted] to carry this poison into the Congo -- that you would have done this without Mr. Dulles' authority?

Mr. Bissell. There was no possibility.

Mr. Dawson. Is there any doubt in your mind that you would have then assumed that Dulles had received the President's okay to do so?

Mr. Bissell. Well, I might well have believed that the Director was proceeding under the mandate of the Special Group as reported in the minutes of the meeting.

Mr. Schwarz. Did you tell [redacted] anything about President Eisenhower?

Mr. Bissell. I probably did, but I don't remember.

Mr. Schwarz. Did Dulles tell you anything about President Eisenhower?

Mr. Bissell. He almost certainly would have told me a good deal about that meeting.

Mr. Schwarz. By that meeting --

Mr. Bissell. The Special Group meeting.

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I think it is probably unlikely that Allen Dulles would have said either the President or President Eisenhower even to me. I think he would have said, this is authorized in the highest quarters, and I would have known what he meant.

Mr. Baron. And you have communicated that to [redacted] [redacted]?

Mr. Bissell. I could very easily.

Mr. Schwarz. Is all of that line that we have just went through could and would and might, and inference, or is any of that recollection?

Mr. Bissell. I am afraid it has to be described as inference.

Mr. diGenova. But you didn't make up the minutes of the Special Group meeting on August 25 and you didn't make up the cable which Mr. Dulles signed either, did you?

Mr. Bissell. No.

Mr. diGenova. So that was actually sent out, wasn't it?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. diGenova. And Mr. Dulles wasn't one who used highest quarters, was he?

Mr. Bissell. Yes -- and also the minutes of the Special Group referred to Mr. Gray's associate.

Mr. Wides. And your testimony a moment ago in response to Mr. dawson's question was, even though this fell within

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what you regarded as the planning stage, this meaning if it occurred, [redacted] taking the poison to the Congo, that you would not have taken that step without the approval of the Director, was that your testimony?

Mr. Bissell. What I will now say at any rate is that the mere act of taking the kit to the Congo I would classify as still in the planning stage. But if it be taken as established that [redacted] took specific instructions "to implement", I would say that we had then passed into an implementation phase.

Mr. Wides. Let me read to you from your testimony on June 11, and then ask you a question based on that.

On page 54 Mr. Schwarz said:

"Who authorized you to tell Mr. O'Donnell to take steps to move toward assassinating Mr. Lumumba?"

And you said: "No one".

And then Mr. Schwarz:

"Did you inform the White House of that?"

"No."

"To the best of your knowledge did anybody inform the White House of that?"

"Mr. Bissell. To the best of my knowledge, no.

"Mr. Schwarz. Why did you seek to assassinate Mr. Lumumba?

"Mr. Bissell. I didn't seek to assassinate him. I

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1 told the members of the clandestine service to make plans
2 and develop the capability so to do if it were approved and
3 ordered."
4 Now, in regard to your answer that no one had told you
5 to tell Mr. O'Donnell to take steps to move toward assassinat-
6 ing Mr. Lumumba, I take it that reading that now in the
7 context of other information we have, that answer was not
8 intended to mean that -- page 54 -- you were not then testi-
9 fying affirmatively that no one had spoken to you at a higher
10 level about trying to assassinate Lumumba, but merely in
11 regard to your discussion with O'Donnell, which you did recall?
12 Mr. Bissell. My recollection -- and this I will des-
13 cribe as a recollection, it may be faulty -- is that it was
14 my own idea to give O'Donnell this assignment. He had, I
15 believe, recently completed some other, or there was a change
16 of position of some kind, and he was available. And given
17 the background which has here been established this afternoon,
18 I believe it was my notion to give him this assignment in
19 parallel to any other things that were still going forward.
20 It would have been unusual to have advised anybody
21 outside the Agency of a specific assignment to an individual
22 of that sort.
23 Mr. Wides. And the implication of the lack of authori-
24 zation from above yourself, or discussion with anyone above
25 yourself, was confined simply to the giving of the asignment

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to Mr. O'Donnell?

Mr. Bissell. That is correct.

And it is my recollection, as I have testified in part earlier this afternoon, that when O'Donnell came later and declined the assignment and expressed the view that this was not the way to solve the problem, that I shut off the O'Donnell operation completely.

Mr. Wides. Let me go back to that if I can. Mr. O'Donnell's testimony, which I believe we went over with you when you testified, we might ask you to see now if you have any different recollection.

In essence it is the following: that you called him in and asked him to go to the Congo for the purposes of trying to see if Lumumba could be assassinated, that very evening you asked him, right at that moment, and it was toward the end of the day, as he recalled it, you asked him to see [redacted] that he expressed reservation about assassination, but did go down to see [redacted] And [redacted] discussed with him several lethal means, and he immediately came back to your office and said, I won't do it, and raised legal questions, moral questions --

Mr. Dawson. I don't think he testified that he immediately came back.

Mr. Schwarz. The same day.

Mr. Wides. Same day -- and that he then went next

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door, as I say, and discussed it with Mr. Helms.

This is Mr. O'Donnell's testimony.

Mr. O'Donnell further testified that he told you he would be willing to go to the Congo to explore the possibility of neutralizing him in other ways, and that shortly thereafter in the space of a few days went to the Congo. And I believe the record suggests that he was there from October through December, and that while he was looking into the possibility of trying to get Lumumba out of the property away from effective custody of the U.N. with the thought that if the Central Congolese Government obtain control of him, they might try him for capital crimes, and this might result in his physical removal. And this was mooted by Lumumba's escape and recapture and death, and he then came back.

Is it still your recollection that there was a period of several weeks between the time you broached the subject of an assassination and the time that Mr. O'Donnell expressed his opposition to it?

Mr. Bissell. I shouldn't be firm on the several weeks. But my recollection of the course of events differs in, I think, only one -- or is inconsistent with his recollection as you reported it in only the one respect, that the impression I carried away was that at a minimum some days -- and I had thought a period of at least a week elapsed between my giving him the assignment and his coming back to decline

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the assignment and recommend a different approach. What you further quote from his testimony I had not remembered, but it does now seem to me that I do remember -- part of my original recollection was that when he came back to me I have several times used the phrase, this was not the way to deal with the problem of Lumumba. And that is wholly consistent with his having proposed other means of neutralizing Lumumba short of using physical violence on him directly. I do seem to recollect that.

And although I had not remembered it, I do now seem to recollect that he went out there and with the assignment, most of it in his recollection rather than mine, of looking at other ways of neutralizing Lumumba. But my recollection simply differs from his on the matters of the timing and how soon he came back.

Mr. Wides. Do you recall when you proposed to Mr. Harvey, in what I think we concluded was most probably very early 1961, that he explore executive action capability, and that two people who had been cut in in some way on earlier considerations or explorations of assassination, and two people whom therefore he might discuss this with, were Mr. Arnold Silver and [redacted]

Mr. Bissell. I can't say honestly that I recollect that. But especially with respect to [redacted] this would have been absolutely -- I am reasonably sure that is what

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I would have done.

Mr. Wides. But you don't recall suggesting -- or if he brought it up, approving -- his discussing it with them, in part from a security angle, because [redacted] had already been cut in, so to speak, with regard to prior considerations of assassination possibilities?

Mr. Bissell. Well, I am sorry to have to retreat the inference. I think I would have encouraged him to talk to them myself. And I don't think I would have particularly worried at that point about the security implications.

Mr. Wides. Do you recall why you would have encouraged him or suggested that he speak to Arnold Silver? 03

Mr. Bissell. No, unless Arnold Silver had had some connection with this operation. And I don't remember what the circumstances were.

Mr. Baron. Do you recall an agent who went by the cryptonym of QJWINN that I believe we discussed in your earlier testimony?

Mr. Bissell. I dimly remember that there was such, yes.

Mr. Baron. Do you recall that he worked for O'Donnell in the Congo and was sent there by Arnold Silver who had recruited him in Europe?

Mr. Bissell. I didn't recollect that.

Mr. Wides. Does it ring a bell of any sort?

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Mr. Bissell. Well, there was an agent [redacted] who was used against the Lumumba faction in the Congo.

Now, the agent I have in mind, he was extremely successful. [redacted] This agent was obviously engaged in an extremely hazardous business, because if his cover had been blown he certainly would have been, I think, killed.

Now, this may be the agent in question. I do not remember that agent ever being put under O'Donnell's control. But if O'Donnell was given the assignment to find ways of neutralizing Lumumba, given that assignment to O'Donnell when he went out there, it is very possible that this agent would have been put in touch with him.

Mr. Schwarz. Why did you pick O'Donnell, incidentally, for the initial assignment, the part that was killing him, as opposed to other methods of neutralizing him?

Mr. Bissell. My recollection is that I regarded him as highly competent in the craft, I think correctly. I regarded him, I think incorrectly as the events turned out, as a very tough guy in the sense this guy Harvey had, that such reputation, and I think with hindsight deserved it.

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And I suspect -- I have some recollection that about that time, in the fall of 1960, O'Donnell became available from some previous assignment.

Mr. Wides. And you had had contact with him in regard to his being Station Chief in [redacted] during the U-2 program?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, I guess so. And other contacts. I had known him in the agency.

Mr. Baron. Let's see if this refreshes your recollection on the use of QJWINN. He subsequently became the principal asset in the [redacted] under Harvey's direction?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Baron. And Harry apparently arranged with Arnold Silver, who was supervising QJWINN in Europe, to have QJWINN [redacted]

Does that refresh your recollection as to QJWINN's mission in the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. It suggests to me that the man I had in mind was not QJWINN, but a different agent. And I don't remember, I don't remember a thing about it.

Mr. Baron. What was QJWINN's mission in the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. I can only surmise that he had some connection -- that either he had the means of "getting close to Lumumba", or that he had connections that might provide --

Mr. Baron. I will represent to you that there is a

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memo on November 2, 1960, sent by William Harvey in his capacity as Chief of Staff D to [Arnold Silver] with a copy going to Bronson Tweedy that describes QJWINN, and talks at great length about his mission in the Congo, without pinpointing it. The memo talks about the fact that it is an extremely sensitive operation, and that QJWINN himself wouldn't be told the purpose of it before he is sent down there.

Does that refresh your recollection about his mission?

Mr. Bissell. I am afraid not.

Mr. Baron. If there were a mission in the Congo at that point for Staff D purposes, what would that mission have been?

Mr. Bissell. The Staff D was concerned with communications intelligence, as you know. And I would surmise that a Staff D connected mission in the Congo would have involved planting means of listening to conversation or traffic or in some other way intercepting communications. That is the competence of Staff D and its responsibility.

Mr. Baron. Planting by means of surreptitious entry or by other means?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, although Staff D wasn't concerned with bugging people's rooms or this kind of thing. It is concerned with true communications intelligence, or it was at that time.

Mr. Baron. If you had informed William Harvey at the

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point when executive action was being sent up that [redacted] was already cut in on the discussions of an assassination capability, would you assume that that referred to [redacted] supervision of QJWINN.

Mr. Bissell. Well, it could have. It sounds that way.

Mr. Baron. When you told Harvey that [redacted] had already been cut in on the discussions of an assassination capability, fit that refer back to [redacted] activities in reference to the Congo?

Mr. Bissell. Well, it probably referred to those -- and perhaps to earlier discussions or more generalized discussions with [redacted] in his capacity as science advisor, and therefore someone who would be knowledgeable of weapons of various kinds.

Mr. Schwarz. Did you have such discussions with him?

Mr. Bissell. I believe so.

Mr. Schwarz. And that, now, is a recollection, I take it from the way you are speaking?

Mr. Bissell. It is closer to that than most of what I have to say.

Mr. schwarz. What is your recollection of the discussion with [redacted]?

Mr. Bissell. Over a considerable period of months when he was in that capacity --

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Mr. Schwarz. Which started when?

Mr. Bissell. I don't remember.

Mr. Schwarz. 1960?

Mr. Bissell. I think it was 1960. And the background, as I am sure the record shows, was that [redacted] had been in TSD, and he had then gone for a tour of duty, I believe, to [redacted] where he continued in the same kind of work. But he had a much closer connection with espionage operations and counter espionage in the field. When I brought him back his mission in effect was a very broad one, it really was to find ways and means -- to concentrate on technical ways and means, meaning by technical within the general area of the physical and biological sciences, of improving the effectiveness of all kinds of covert operations.

Now, in a sense that was the mission of the Technical Services Division itself. But [redacted] role was to pay special attention to the interconnections between the technical people in TSD and the operators in the rest of the clandestine service, and to find out whether the technical requirements that TSD was striving to meet were appropriate, in other words, did they really know what the operators needed and wanted, and also to find out if the operators knew what TSD had available. It was that kind of a thing.

Now, I had many conversations with him on that, because this was a success that interested me a great deal. And I

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had great respect for his judgment. And especially given this Congo involvement, I certainly would have discussed with him, probably on a number of occasions, the availability of means of incapacitation, including assassination.

Mr. Schwarz. And those discussions are prior to your Harvey assignment?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, I believe so -- yes, they would have.

Mr. Schwarz. Would have been or were?

Mr. Bissell. Well, Harvey's assignment wasn't until January of 1961, so they obviously were.

Mr. Wides. Mr. Bissell, with regard to the earlier discussion with your sense of authorization, you said that you do recall the discussions with O'Donnell, and that although you can't remember specific discussions with Tweedy, in general you recall that you were looking into the possibility of exploring and planning the possible assassination of Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Wides. In the light of the documents from the group and Mr. Dulles' cable that have been read, do you have any recollection now wheher you thought at your level you had sufficient authority that even though you had not done so you could direct people below you to carry from the planning stage into the implementation stage an assassination

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of Lumumba at that time?

Mr. Bissell. I probably so believed. I think, however, given the context, it is very unlikely that I would have taken such a step without clearing it with Allen Dulles.

Mr. Wides. You say you probably so believe. Is that based at all on a recollection, or simply inference?

Mr. Bissell. It is the way my mind worked then, and probably still does. You are asking me a question about whether I believed I had authority?

Mr. Wides. Yes.

Mr. Bissell. A good many years ago, and I am saying that given the evidence here and the background as it has been developed here this afternoon, it is my recollection that given the way my mind works, I probably did think I had authority.

But it is also very unlikely.

Mr. Schwarz. There are two parts of your answer which were at war with each other. On the one hand you say, based upon having seen some Special Group minutes and a cable, both of which say in effect that killing should not be ruled out as a matter of consideration --

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Schwarz. On the one hand you say that based upon those two items, you probably believe you had authority to order action?

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Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Schwarz. Move from contemplation to action or consideration of action?

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Schwarz. On the other hand you say, well, yes, although I probably believed that, on the other hand I probably spoke to Mr. Dulles about it, or would have spoken to Mr. Dulles about it.

Mr. Bissell. You will recognize that here again I am talking about the pattern of my relationship with him and the way the Agency worked.

Now, here was a matter in which the authorization, such as it was, had come down clearly from the Special Group to Mr. Dulles personally.

Mr. Schwarz. Now, we are talking about the exhibits which show an authorization -- assuming you read the words as meaning killing --

Mr. Bissell. Not excluding, yes.

Mr. Schwarz. -- an authorization to consider that.

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Schwarz. And that had come down?

Mr. Bissell. It had come down to me via Allen Dulles, and in terms that Allen was in effect being strongly encouraged to pursue the course of action outlined in the exhibit. I think under these circumstances that I would have

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gone back to him with, for instance, any cable of authorization or other instruction before sending it out even if I did believe him.

But let us say in his absence from Washington I had the authority to send.

Mr. Dawson. You say unlike the case of the White House where you would not take details back, in the case of Mr. Dulles you would discuss the details of a specific operation?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. But it is not really amatter of details, Mr. Bissell. That is an important distinction. We have been talking about a chain that starts with two memos, or three memos. We have talked about contemplation or consideration, don't rule out killing, it doesn't use the word killing, but it could be read to mean killing, don't rule out killing from the items to be considered.

Now, moving from doing it is not a detail, is it?

Mr. Bissell. No, I wouldn't call it a detail by any manner of means, but I would read that language as authorizing any decision by the Director or the Director's authority.

Mr. Schwarz. You would read the language of the two exhibits, one of which comes from the Administration and one of which is the Director cable --

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Schwarz. You would read the language of the Special

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Group minutes --

Mr.Baron. Of August 25, 1960.

Mr. Bissell. Right.

Mr. Schwarz. May I see that?

After talking about extremely strong feelings, straightforward action, and Dulles commenting on taking this seriously, proceeding vigorously, the agreement is:

"It was finally agreed that planning for the Congo would not necessarily rule out 'consideration' of any particular kind of activity which might contribute to getting rid of Lumumba".

Now, the first point, you read that to mean not ruling out killing?

Mr. Bissell. Correct.

Mr. Schwarz. Now, was it just your testimony that you believe that the agreement that planning for the Congo would not necessarily rule out possible consideration of -- and now I will substitute the word killing -- is authority to actually order the killing -- sufficient authority?

Mr. Bissell. May I look again at the other exhibit, Mr. Dulles' cable of the next day.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Schwarz. Back on the record.

There is a pending question.

Mr. Bissell. It is my belief on the basis of the cable

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drafted by Allen Dulles that he regarded the action of the Special Group as authorizing implementation if favorable circumstances presented themslves, if it could be done covertly. He speaks of targets of opportunity. He authorized, as I remember the words of the cable "even more aggressive action".

And the tone of the cable clearly gives the Station Chief a lot of latitude and conveys a sense of very great urgency.

Mr. Schwarz. And whether or not that is a proper construction of the Special Group is not really something we need to discuss.

Finish the Congo, then.

Mr. Baron. I have one more question on [redacted] visist. And that is, in the light of the entire atmosphere at the Agency and the policy at the Agency at that time, [redacted] representation to the Chief of Station that the President had instructed the DCI to carry out this mission would not have been beyond the pale of [redacted] authority at that point?

Mr. Bissell. No, it would not.

Mr. Baron. For the sake of the record, let's introduce as an exhibit the memo that I referred to earlier as November 1960. And I will ask you one question about it. This is a memo going from the Chief of KUTUBE/D. And that

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is the Foreign Intelligence Division, which would have been William Harvey at that time.

Mr. Bissell. I believe so.

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 3 for identification.)

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Mr. Baron. Did you receive a copy of this cable?

Mr. Bissell. I think it is doubtful. And I don't believe I would have. It is rather narrowly an operational matter.

Mr. Baron. Thank you.

Next, let's turn to a cable that was sent on September 16, 1960, to Leopoldville from CIA Headquarters which we will mark Exhibit 4.

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 4 for identification.)

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Mr. Baron. This is a cable that we reviewed, Mr. Bissell, before we began your testimony today. And I will turn your attention to the paragraph that says:

"It is still difficult to determine whether Mobutu had sufficient control army to enforce decisions announced night 14 September. Station advised" --

And then there is a sanitized paragraph --

"Station advised two moderate Congolese politicians 'try work with key Congolese contact' in effort eliminate Lumumba. Fear UN protection will give Lumumba opportunity organization counterattack. Only solution is remove him from scene soonest".

Now, the night of September 14 was the night of a coup in the Congo where Mobutu took power, is that correct?

Mr. Bissell. Correct.

Mr. Baron. And does this cable refresh your recollection as to the attitude at the Agency toward Lumumba even after he was in U.N. custody?

Mr. Bissell. Yes. It seems to say rather clearly that it was still desirable to eliminate him.

Mr. Baron. WAs it still your recollection, then, that there was a continued sense of urgency about eliminating Lumumba after he was in U.N. custody?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Baron. And this would account in part for the fact

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that there was no clear order to stand down the assassination mission after Lumumba was in U.N. custody?

Mr. Bissell. That is correct.

Mr. Baron. There is a set of NSC minutes from September 21, 1960, that I would like to introduce as Exhibit 5.

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 5 for identification.)

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Mr. Baron. You are not listed as a participant at the meeting, although Mr. Dulles is present, and the following paragraph relates a remark of Mr. Dulles:

"Nobutu appeared to be the effective power in the Congo for the moment, but Lumumba was not yet disposed of and remained a grave danger as long as he was not disposed of".

Does that accord with your understanding of the policy of the National Security Council toward Lumumba even after he was in U.N. custody?

Mr. Bissell. It does.

Mr. Baron. And the language "disposed of" would contemplate assassination at least as one means of disposing of him?

Mr. Bissell. As one means, as one possible means, if necessary.

Mr. Baron. I have one further exhibit which we will mark Exhibit 6, that is, a cable dated December 17, 1960 sent to the Director from Leopoldville.

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 6 for identification.)

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Mr. Baron. And this cable deals with an incident where an asset of the Chief of Station who was known by the cryptonym WIROGUE made an approach to agent QJWIN. And the cable says:

"QJWIN, who resides same hotel as WIROGUE, reported that he had lived Alaska, Japan, South America, Germany and other parts Europe. QJWIN said, WIROGUE smells as though he in intel business. Station denies any info on WIROGUE. 14 December QJWIN reported WIROGUE had offered him $300 per month to participate in intel net and be member execution squad. When QJWIN said he not interested, WIROGUE added there would be bonuses for special jobs. Under QJWIN questioning, WIROGUE later said he worked for P.B. PRIME Service".

Do you recall this incident?

Mr. Bissell. I don't, no.

Mr. Baron. Does P.B. Prime Service refer to the American Intelligence Service?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, it does.

Mr. Baron. Namely, the CIA?

Mr Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Baron. Do you recall anything about the formation of an execution squad in the Congo during this period?

Mr. Bissell. I take that to be a phrase used by an agent.

(Discussion off the record.)

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Mr. diGenova. Mr. Bissell, I want to switch, unfortunately, from the Continent of Africa and go to Cuba. This is the same time period, however, it is July of 1960.

I had a conversation with you on August 6 over the telephone. You may recall the conversation. I have in front of me a cable which we will mark as Exhibit No. 7.

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 7 for identification.)

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Mr. Baron. And this is a cable sent from headquarters to the Havana Station dated July 21, 1960. The first sentence of the cable reads:

"Possible removal top three leaders is receiving serious consideration at headquarters".

The cable is signed by [redacted] by direction Tracy Barnes for DDP, and about [redacted] by direction J.C. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division as authenticating officer. Relseasing officer was Tracy Barnes.

Do you have any independent recollection of that cable and what surrounded its issuance at headquarters?

Mr. Bissell. I don't remember it until you mentioned it to me in the telephone conversation to which you have alluded.

Mr. diGenova. Having had some time to think about it since we spoke on August 6, does it ring any bell at this juncture?

Mr. Bissell. It does not, I am afraid.

Mr. diGenova. It is apparent that this cable was sent out at a time when you were having conversations in the summer or the fall of 1960 with Mr. Tweedy and Mr. O'Donnell concerning Mr. Lumumba, is that correct?

Mr. Bissell. Correct.

Mr. diGenova. Did Mr. Dulles at any time during this period or prior to it or subsequent to it ever issue a directive assigning assassination as an agency action?

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Mr. Bissell. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. diGenova. Do you have any knowledge as to whether or not Mr. Dulles knew about the issuance of this cable which stated that the possible removal of the top three leaders in Cuba was receiving serious consideration at headquarters?

Mr. Bissell. I don't have knowledge of that, no.

You yourself quoted internal evidence from the cable and the one that was sent, a followup the following day, suggesting that he may have ordered it countermanded.

Mr. diGenova. The duty officer at that particular time, that evening, indicated that he had sent this cable, and that he had been instructed, as he recalled it by Mr. Barnes, to send this cable, and that the wording came from Mr. Barnes.

Now, the duty officer also said that the next day when he came in there was a cable, which we have, and we will mark that as Exhibit No. 8, which in toto said:

"Do not pursue reference, would like to drop matter."

And that was signed singly by Tracy Barnes.

(The document referred to was marked Bissell Exhibit No. 8 for identification.)

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Mr. diGenova. Now, the duty officer who had issued the first cable about serious consideration, he had no personal knowledge, but he had heard that Mr. Dulles had countermanded the original cable, talking about the possible removal, and authorizing the approach to the asset, the Cuban pilot, who actually attempted the crash of the plane which would carry Raol Castro from Prague to Havana.

Do you have any personal knowledge as to why Mr. Dulles would have countermanded, assuming that he did?

Mr. Bissell. I don't have any recollection. I could surmise lots of things.

Mr. diGenova. What I want to ask you is this: do you have an independent recollection that any assassination efforts against the Cuban leaders which were being considered contmmplated simultaneous action against all three, otherwise it would be useless action?

Mr. Bissell. The only evidence I know of, hard evidence, is the Special Group minute to which I referred earlier, which was an exhibit in earlier testimony.

Mr. diGenova. You are referring to the Merchant cable exchange of November 3, 1960?

Mr. Bissell. That is correct.

Mr. diGenova. Now, Mr. [redacted] the duty officer, has no personal knowledge about the rescission of that cable.

Does it seem to you upon reflection, knowing what you

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know -- for example, Mr. Dulles cable to the Congo personally authorizing, apparently, the assassination of Mr. Lumumba, and [redacted] to do it -- is it inconsistent to your way of thinking that he would have authorized that assassination and would have rescinded this cable that would have apparently authorized the assassination of Raul Castro.

Mr. Bissell. Not inconsistent at all. I think it may well have embodied a judgment on Mr. Dulles part that this effort concerning Raul Castro was altogether too risky, and technically not sufficiently likely of success.

Mr. diGenova. During our initial telephone conversation on August 6 you speculated, and you clearly identified it as mere speculation, that one of the reasons that Mr. Dulles, assuming he did, ordered that initial cable countermanded was, first, too many innocent persons on the plane would have been killed, and second, that it was so risky because there had been just an initial approach of the asset and it wasn't known whether or not he was a double agent, and thirdly, it appeared that the contemplation of all three, the assassination of all three was being considered, and, therefore, since only Raol would be on this plane that it would have resulted in the dilemma that they sought to avoid, that is, if he had been killed there would have been two left over, and there may have been a reason that he ordered the countermand.

Would you take by that as a form of speculation at this

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point as one of the reasons that he would have countermanded that cable?

Mr. Bissell. I would.

Mr. Schwarz. Could I follow up on the Congo, Exhibit 2, the Dulles cable to Leopoldville.

Now, we apparently read to you when I was out of the room the first paragraph at least, which talks about the clear-cut conclusion:

"If he continues to hold high office the inevitable result would be chaos and at worst pave the way for Communist takeover. Consequently, we conclude that his removal must be an urgent and prime objective, and under existing conditions this must be a high priority of your covert action".

And you have read that language as meaning killing, right?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. Schwarz. I want to ask you if you continue to read it as killing in the light of the third paragraph of the cable which reads as follows:

"To the extent that Ambassador may desire to be consulted you should seek his concurrence. If in any particular case he does not wish to be consulted you can act on your own authority where time does not permit reference here.

"Paragraph 4, this message has been seen and approved at competent level of the Department of State".

Do you still believe in the light of the authorization

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to discuss the matter with the Ambassador that assassination was involved?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, especially since there is evidence here that it was discussed with and approved at State, and in the light of the background in this Special Group.

Mr. Schwarz. You don't think this is referring to a coup?

Mr. Bissell. I don't think so. But I can't be perfectly certain. But I think it refers to more than that. I think actually it is saying, his removal by some means or other is the very high priority objective. I would infer from this that what we know was discussed at least in the Special Group, and that is that removal might be by the means of assassination, although obviously others would be preferred.

Could I add one word in answer to that question. I am almost certain I am correct, that the then Ambassador to the Congo was Edward Gullion.

Mr. Baron. I believe it was Timberlake.

Mr. Bissell. I think Gullion had arrived by this time. But certainly in Gullion's regime there was extremely close collaboration between the Ambassador and the Chief of Station. And the Ambassador was an individual who would have been quite prepared to contemplate this kind of action.

Mr. Wides. Mr. Bissell, just to make sure the record is complete in terms of your efforts to analyze that, if I

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1 represented to you that at the time there was traffic between
2 the station and headquarters in the normal African Division
3 channels regarding U.S. efforts to influence President
4 Kasavubu and others to dismiss Lumumba from political power as
5 premier, and also traffic relating to a takeover of the real
6 power by certain military figures such as Mr. Mobutu, would
7 your reading of that cable still be that it suggests authori-
8 zation of assassination as opposed to possibly discussing
9 only authorization of removal of him from political power?
10 Mr. Bissell. I think it authorizes removal. And I
11 think that probably Mr. Dulles would have said, if you
12 can possibly really remove him through political power, that
13 is obviously the preferred course of action.
14 But I think this authorizes the whole tone of it very
15 strong measures indeed.
16 I say in support of that, there had been a record
17 established that even after Lumumba had been removed from
18 political power and had taken refuge in the U.N. he was
19 still widely regarded as a menace.
20 Mr. Dawson. I would like to follow very briefly on
21 this. I would like to ask you about this agent that you did
22 have a firm recollection of being President of the Congo. He
23 was described as being a well-placed or a very good agent,
24 was he not?
25 Mr. Bissell. I think he was a very good agent, and

also he made an effective penetration of Lumumba's supporters both in the Congo, and as it were, in the line of funding and supply in Europe.

Mr. Dawson. So, he was in place, so to speak?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

In other words, he was a dual agent.

Mr. Dawson. Did he have access directly to Lumumba?

Mr. Bissell. I think he did, yes.

Mr. Dawson. Do you remember having been told that he sometime in November or December went to Stanleyville?

Mr. Bissell. I don't remember the specific case, but it fits the pattern very well. What I do remember is one operation. But he knew of, he was close enough to -- he was used as a courier from Lumumba, I think, first in the capitol, and then later from Stanleyville to Europe. And on one occasion, because he had penetrated so effectively, he was aware that a large amount of cash was being taken by two other couriers down to the Congo, and as a result of his awareness of that, and all the details of that trip, that shipment was intercepted.

Mr. Dawson. The Chief of Station testified about having an agent that had access.

Would this have been the agent that he believed he would have access to?

Mr. Bissell. I believe he would have, yes.

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Mr. Dawson. Thank you.

Mr. Wides. Mr. Bissell, touching briefly on [redacted] when you testified to the Rockefeller Commission, and this was reviewed very summarily when he testified before us, that you recalled some possibility -- some planning of a possibility of [redacted] progressing as far as the identification of an asset who might be recruited for this purpose, but the plan was never reached and never perfected to a point where it was decided to go ahead.

Do you recall anything, or do you have any information that would be relevant to our information that [redacted]

Does that ring a bell at all?

Mr. Bissell. No, sir. That one I don't remember at all. I remember enough of the plan that I referred to know that what you speak of was a different activity.

Mr. Wides. And the one you referred to involved [redacted]

Mr. Bissell. I think it involved -- I don't know what nationality the asset, but I think it involved a [redacted]

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Mr. Wides. Either when you became DDP or before, whether or not you were personally involved, did you ever hear anything regarding any efforts by the CIA to assassinate Nasser and to send teams, assassination tems into Egypt for that purpose?

Mr. Bissell. No, I never did. I could almost go so far as to say that that was one that was never even thought of.

Mr. Schwarz. We forgot to ask you a question which we ask almost all the other high people who come down here to testify.

Looking back on things, now, -- and I hate to use the word get rid of, but let me --do you think the U.S. should get rid of assassination as a tool?

Mr. Bissell. I think in today's atmosphere the answer is yes.

Mr. Wides. Why do you think that?

Mr.Bissell. I think that to use means for the advancement of policy of such a sort that in the prevailing climate these days would be almost certainly disapproved of by a large majority of the legislative arm, and the public at large, and everybody else, is unwise unless you can have absolute confidence of total security. And by security I mean that outside of the two or three people who

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undertake the effort, nobody else will ever know about it.

Now, that circumstance doesn't obtain today, it never has, but it certainly doesn't today. And I think the climate is as I have described. And I, therefore, would eliminate this method.

Mr. diGenova. I just have one question. I apologize for jumping around, but part of this is to get you out of here.

When the phrase"receiving serious consideration" in headquarters was used in that cable that we alluded to in regard to the attempt to kill Raol Castro, what does that mean to you when Tracy Barnes authorized that sort of language to be used in a cable?

Mr. Bissell. It means that he had fought and talked about this, and almost certainly that I have. And it may refer to considerations with Allen Dulles. I can't tell how wide ranging they would be. They would probably have involved J.C. King, the head of that division.

Mr. Schwarz. Did Barnes work for you?

Mr. Bissell. Yes, he did.

Mr. Schwarz. He is now dead, isn't he?

Mr. Bissell. Yes.

Mr. diGenova. But that was not light language when it was sent to a station?

Mr. Bissell. No.

It was sent to encourage careful planning.

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Mr. Schwarz. Thank you very much.

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

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