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MEETING 13 JUNE 1975

Box 418-7

TOP SECRET

SECRETRICHARD HELMS

UNCLASSIFIED

MAR 2 1977

Helms' testimony will be that in early 1961 he was "briefed" on the so-called Phase I assassination scheme to remove Castro. He thinks he was briefed by Harvey rather than by Bissell, but acknowledges such briefing, although he is unclear as to the details.

(Helms says that there was an ongoing requirement on the Agency and indeed a government-wide operation (Project MONGOOSE) to remove Castro.) Helms says that there were "no limitations" ever put on the methods which would be acceptable to remove Castro, e.g. if pressed he will agree that assassination is one such acceptable method. Therefore, on the issue of authority, Helms will say that because he felt that there was an ongoing presidentially-authorized program to remove Castro, he did not seek any specific approval from either McCone, Attorney General Kennedy, or any one else in the White House when he "took over" the Harvey operation to remove Castro.

Helms will, however, make every effort to downplay anything that occurred after he was "briefed" and "took over" (as DDP) the responsibility from Bissell for this operation. While Helms acknowledges that he did approve Harvey's contact with Roselli, he will say that he viewed Roselli as an experimental contact who would probably not amount to any concrete action. Helms will dismiss the post-1962 schemes as harebrained proposals which were made by lower-level employees with over-active imaginations and that he considered them proposals rather than definite assassination plans.

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Helms will state that he always felt that he was carrying out Presidential directives and never operating on his own or without authority.

As to McCone, Helms will say that he never felt it necessary to brief him on any of the details but (I think) that, if pressed, he will say that he felt that McCone was aware that there was an ongoing program to remove Castro without any limitations as to means. Helms says he realizes that McCone now appears to be taking a "somewhat higher" position on this matter.

Helms also said that the "extreme pressure" to get rid of Castro persisted all the way through 1963 but seemed to let up after the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963. Helms will say, however, that we were still "picking" at him in the post-'63 period. He slips and slides when queried on what "picking" means but, if pressed, he will, I believe, say that this could include someone knocking him off.

Attorney General Kennedy meeting and memorandum.

Attorney General Kennedy was briefed by Houston and Edwards on 7 May 1962 regarding the so-called First Phase of the assassination attempt. Sheffield Edwards states that Kennedy was briefed "all the way." Kennedy is reported to have told them that if CIA was going to use gangsters in the future that they should check with him first. He did not say do not engage in any assassination program.

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This meeting is complicated by a 14 May 1972 memorandum (which is in your folder). It describes the 7 May meeting in terms of obfuscation, avoiding any discussion of "assassination." I view this as clearly a cover memorandum -- Senator Church will probably view it as an indication that Kennedy did not approve or know about the assassination program.

Interesting Note: Helms recalls that the State Department had a man engaged in a full-time effort to try and arrange a group to take over the government of Cuba upon the assassination of Castro.

Post-1961 Specific Phase II Operations.

(1) On 18 April 1962 poison pills were delivered by CIA Dr. Triecher to Harvey to be sent into Cuba. Later memoranda indicate that these pills were actually sent to Cuba. Additionally, memoranda indicate that the pills were "in place" ready for the attempt.

(2) Guns and explosives were given by Harvey and JMWAVE Chief Shackley to Cuban asset Verona at a cost of \$5,000.

(3) In June of 1962 and later in September documents indicate that three-man teams were sent into Cuba by Harvey's operatives for assassination attempts. Indeed, in December 1962/January 1963 a \$2700 payment was made by Harvey to Verona for expenses of the three-man teams.

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(4) April/May 1963. Helms approves Harvey's meeting with Roselli as a kind of "close-out" of the Roselli relationship. FBI has Roselli under surveillance -- calls Harvey and says they must tell Hoover -- Harvey calls Helms -- Helms says no need to brief McCone. Note: Senator Church may view this as another indication of Helms acting on his own.

(5) In 1963 CIA's TSD implements a skin-diving suit with poison and proposes a scheme regarding an exploding seashell. Helms will say they were only wacky proposals by underlings which never got anywhere. While this may be true as to the latter, the skindiving suit/TSD must have had his approval -- TSD reports directly to DDP.

(6) October 1963. Des Fitzgerald (now deceased) goes to Paris to meet Cuban asset Cubella. Cubella wants to assassinate Castro. Documents indicate that Helms tells Fitzgerald he may use the Attorney General's name without seeking approval from Kennedy.

(7) Circa November 22, 1963. Dr. Gunn of CIA prepares poison pen which is delivered to Cubella in Paris. Documents unclear as to whether Cubella accepts it or not.

(8) 7 March 1966. Helms sends memorandum to Secretary Rusk denying Agency use of Cubella in assassination scheme. While Helms may have a technical interpretation which makes the memorandum correct it doesn't disclose any of the CIA's contacts with Cubella.

Note: This again be used to argue no executive approval.

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FOR HELMS TESTIMONY -- PHASE II OPERATIONS UNDER HARVEY

February 1962. Bissell was replaced by Helms on February 17. Prior to Helms formally becoming DDP on February 9 is the "first recorded 'authorization' of ZRRIFLE Project; Helms gives written authority for Harvey to handle ZRRIFLE with unvouchered funds based on Harvey's general sign-off.]

April 1962 was when Edwards recalls Harvey asking for an introduction to Roselli. *(The Harvey-Roselli-O'Connell meeting in NY)* This took place on April 8 or 9.

Both Edwards and Harvey stated in 1967 that they each independently checked with Helms prior to Edwards introducing Harvey to Roselli.

In 1967 Harvey stated that thereafter he "regularly briefed" Helms on the status of the Castro operation. *(He reported this to me)*

The 1967 report states that Edwards' statement he "verified Helms' approval to go ahead with Roselli and Harvey" is the earliest indication that Helms had been made witting of the syndicate operation against Castro.

According to Harvey (in 1967) it was at this time, in early April when Harvey briefed Helms on Roselli that he obtained Helms' approval not to brief McCone.

Implementation of Phase II.

Dr. Treichler's records indicate that he delivered four pills (1 capsule and three tablets) to Jim O'Connell on April 18, 1962. Harvey gave the pills to Verona in Miami in late April. In late

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April or early May the CIA supplied a variety of military equipment to Verona as part of the reward for his participation.

[AS HARVEY WAS REPORTING TO HELMS REGULARLY AS HE SAYS, IS IT LIKELY HE WOULD HAVE TOLD HELMS ABOUT THIS?] In May, Harvey was told the pills were in Cuba at a restaurant reportedly used by Castro. (At this point Verona was still using the chef plan).

June 21 Harvey was told Verona had dispatched a three-man team to Cuba, who would attempt to kill Castro if an opportunity presented itself to use the pill.

In September Verona indicated he was infiltrating three more men who were former Cuba militia men who would try to penetrate Castro's body-guard. (These men apparently did not actually leave Florida, but Harvey gave Verona \$2700 for this three-man team's expense.) Thereafter the arrangements were gradually broken off.

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