
Agency Information

AGENCY : SSCIA
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10014-10169
RECORD SERIES : MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 07-M-74

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA
FROM :
TO :
TITLE : RICHARD BISSELL
DATE : 08/06/1975
PAGES : 33
SUBJECTS :
ZRRIFLE
BISSELL, RICHARD
DOCUMENT TYPE : MEMORANDUM
CLASSIFICATION : Declassified
RESTRICTIONS : 1B; 1C
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 05/31/2000
OPENING CRITERIA :
COMMENTS : CCBOX 354

Released under the John
F. Kennedy
Assassination Records
Collection Act of 1992
(44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#:NW 54653 Date:
10-23-2017

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY : SSCIA
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10014-10169
RECORDS SERIES : MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 07-M-74

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA
FROM :
TO :
TITLE : RICHARD BISSELL
DATE : 08/06/75
PAGES : 33
SUBJECTS : BISSELL, RICHARD

ZRRIFLE

DOCUMENT TYPE : MEMORANDUM
CLASSIFICATION : TOP SECRET
RESTRICTIONS : REFERRED
CURRENT STATUS : POSTPONED IN FULL
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 01/08/99
OPENING CRITERIA :
COMMENTS : CCBOX 354

[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

RICHARD BISSELL

Box
354

SENSITIVE

FILE:

Interview by telephone (203-677-1792) with Richard Bissell on August 6, 1975 (6:00 p.m.) conducted by Joseph di Genova. (Bissell's office: 203-677-2063).

I reviewed for Mr. Bissell the new documents related to the July 1960 incident. This included the July 21, 1960 cable from Langley indicating that the "Possible removal of the top three Cuban leaders being given serious consideration at HQS." Mr. Bissell's independent recollection of that and events about which he had previously testified was not jogged. He said that cable "is just further evidence bearing on the state of mind in Washington toward the Cuban operation." At this point I traced for him the steps of E. H. Hinkle, who sent out the July 21, 1960 cable, and explained Hinkle's recollection concerning Barnes involvement in the writing of the cable. Bissell then noted that "Barnes would probably have told me about it at the time."

When asked about the language "receiving serious consideration," Bissell said that "that suggests to me that the idea was indeed receiving serious consideration and that headquarters was anxious to explore the possibility with the asset." "Dulles would have known that this was being considered." When informed that the cable was subsequently superceded by a cable telling Havana to "Drop Matter" Bissell said that Dulles probably considered this particular effort "too risky, because we didn't know enough about the asset, and because too many innocent people would have been killed by crashing a plane." He speculated that Dulles may have ordered the cancellation of the first cable because the plan did not involve the killing of all three of the top leaders but rather only one, Raul Castro Ruz.

I informed Bissell that J.C. King said that he was probably circumvented on this particular matter; i.e., the incident and also the serious consideration. Bissell remarked that he would be "surprised that King said that he would have been excluded from that type of thing." Bissell could remember no cases where J.C. King was not kept fully informed. In this matter, Bissell noted that "serious consideration in the cable meant that discussions occurred between Dulles, myself, Cabell, Barnes and King." "Barnes was very close to Allen Dulles and me and if Barnes told Hinkle to send that cable with those words 'serious consideration' in it, he would have known what he was talking about." "Barnes simply would not have sent such a cable unless he knew for a fact that it was receiving serious consideration." Bissell then added that one reason to suppose that the matter was receiving serious consideration was that the cable authorized an "approach to the asset, which as you know, is a risky act. Barnes would not have said in the cable that inquiry should be made of the asset unless he had reason to believe that such an operation was being very seriously considered. And he would have only thought that if it had gotten beyond the think-tank level at the agency."

MEMORANDUM

TO : Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr. and Curtis Smothers

FROM: Frederick Baron

DATE: July 16, 1975

RICHARD BISSELL

Index to Issues

The attached "Summary of Pertinent Testimony" from the I.G. REPORT and the transcripts of BISSELL, HELMS, HARVEY, BUNDY, and ROSTOW is organized by the following issues:

- I. EXECUTIVE ACTION: Early 1961
- II. TURNOVER OF SYNDICATE CONTACT TO HARVEY
- III. AUTHORIZATION BY DCI
- IV. PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORIZATION

MEMORANDUM

TO : Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr. and Curtis Smothers

FROM: Frederick Baron

DATE: July 16, 1975

RICHARD BISSELL: SUMMARY OF PERTINENT TESTIMONY

I. EXECUTIVE ACTION (Project ZRRIFLE): Early 1961

I.G. REPORT, 1967: According to HARVEY, "early in the KENNEDY administration BISSELL called him in to discuss what HARVEY refers to as an Executive Action Capability; i.e., a general stand-by capability to carry out assassinations when required. HARVEY's notes quote BISSELL as saying, 'The WHITE HOUSE has twice urged me to create such a capability.' BISSELL recalls discussing the question of developing a general capability with HARVEY." (37)

On February 19, 1962, new DDP RICHARD HELMS approves the handling of the project on a "special basis," including unvouchered funds authorized by HARVEY's certification. (39)

BISSELL:

BISSELL recalls "assigning HARVEY the task of undertaking the ZRRIFLE project," but he does not recall "a specific conversation with anybody in the WHITE HOUSE as the origin of that request." (51; 6/9) BISSELL said, however, "I have no reason to believe that HARVEY's quote (about WHITE HOUSE urgings) is wrong." (51; 6/9) BISSELL recalled turning the project over to HELMS and briefing him on it. (53; 6/11)