

Mr. DODD. Is this the same Lawrence Houston who on May 7, 1962, along with Sheffield Edwards, also of the CIA, briefed Attorney General Robert Kennedy about the pre-Bay of Pigs CIA Mafia plots?

Mr. HELMS. I believe it was the same Mr. Houston. He was General Counsel of the Agency for many years.

Mr. DODD. I am looking here at the report from the Intelligence Committee on page 131, the bottom paragraph: "Briefing of the Attorney General on May 7, 1962."

An entry in Attorney General Kennedy's calendar for May 7, 1962, states, "1 o'clock Richard Helms. At 4 o'clock the Attorney General met with Houston and Edwards to be briefed on the CIA operation involving Maheu, Rosselli, and Giancana."

Mr. HELMS. That would be the meeting.

Mr. DODD. That satisfies your recollection?

Mr. HELMS. That satisfies my recollection. I have been questioned about that calendar on many occasions. That appointment that I had with the Attorney General that day at 1 o'clock apparently was canceled, so I was never there. But I believe Edwards and Houston did keep their appointment.

Mr. DODD. Isn't it true that at that meeting both Mr. Houston and Mr. Edwards told the Attorney General--on May 17, 1962--that the CIA-Mafia plots no longer were in any existence, were terminated?

Mr. HELMS. That is my understanding of what they told him, Mr. Dodd. I believe--wasn't that contained in a memorandum for the record written after their meeting? Was it written by Colonel Edwards? I don't recall; someone wrote it.

Mr. DODD. I will quote for you the bottom paragraph, bb, on page 132 of this report. It says, "And that Kennedy was told the activity had been terminated as of that time."

Mr. HELMS. I assume that is what they told him.

Mr. DODD. In fact, I will read a direct quote here I have on page 133 of this same report, footnote 4 referring to the italicized paragraph at the top of page 133:

The Attorney General was not told that the gambling syndicate operation had already been reactivated, nor as far as we know was he ever told that CIA had a continuing involvement with U.S. gangster elements.

That is from the Inspector General's report, page 65. That is where the italicized words come from. And then the fourth footnote referring to this general line of questioning, it says, footnote 4:

Houston testified that Kennedy insisted "There was not to be any contact of the Mafia without prior consultation with him."

Isn't it also true to your knowledge that in 1967 the CIA Inspector General's report concluded that Sheffield Edwards had, in fact, lied when they and Houston had told the Attorney General that these plots no longer existed?

Mr. HELMS. Does it appear in the Inspector General's report that Edwards lied?

Mr. DODD. Well, maybe semantically we could---

Mr. HELMS. I'm not caviling, I just don't recall any more.

Mr. DODD. On page 134 of this same report, I am reading from the first full paragraph at the top of page 134, which reads as follows.

As concluded by the CIA itself and the Inspector General's report. Edwards' statement that he was not aware of these developments is implausible.

Do you have any disagreement with that statement?

Mr. HELMS. I don't know how to judge it one way or the other. I did not recall the statement as I was sitting here, and I am just unable to help with it. If the Inspector General thought it was iraplausible, I guess he thought it was, but I don't think any final judgment was made about it. It was part of a very long report which was directed at some other things as well, and I don't recall this ever became an issue that anybody had attempted to define, or refine, let me put it that way.

Mr. DODD. The reason I raise it is the credibility of Mr. Houston with regard to the memo, and I thought maybe you might be able to shed some light on why that was not signed. Was that a normal operating procedure not to sign something with your name typewritten underneath it?

Mr. HELMS. I don't know. What we are dealing with is a Xerox, or if it isn't a Xerox--maybe I shouldn't use a company name--let's say a copy. I don't know whether it is a copy of the original memorandum Mr. Houston wrote or a copy of a copy that was made at the time that he wrote the memorandum. I don't know who put the signed LRH down here. In other words, I think that we need some help from the agency as to the exact circumstances, but I can't conceive that Mr. Houston wouldn't be glad to speak for himself. He is still alive and well and living here in Washington.

Mr. DODD. Thank you very much.

This morning I believe I heard you testify that you gave all of the information you believed pertinent to the Warren Commission's investigation--to the commission promptly. Am I recalling your statement correctly there?

Mr. HELMS. I said--I believe I testified, Mr. Dodd, that I believed this to be the case although I had learned in recent years that one must never make a flat statement about anything, so there may have been certain cases in which they did not get information promptly. But I believe our effort was to give it to them as promptly as possible.

Mr. DODD. Alright, I would like to proceed, if I could, for the next few minutes and ask you to respond to questions surrounding the so-called assassination plots that were ongoing during the period from 1961 on. And so I would like to have you focus your attention on that particular aspect of your inquiry here today.

My first question is, to your knowledge, was any member of the Warren Commission, or its staff, ever informed by the Central Intelligence Agency of the CIA's anti-Castro assassination plots?

Mr. HELMS. I assume that you are referring to the one that is most frequently characterized as an assassination plot Which involved the Mafia? Because the other assassination plots I don't accept as assassination plots. And so again We have a definitional problem.

Mr. DODD. Let's start off and ask whether the Warren Commission was ever informed of any of these attempts on the Cuban regime whether on the person of Fidel Castro or an effort to overthrow his government, or an effort to knock him off personally--whatever they fall into. In any of those to areas your knowledge was the Warren Commission, members or their staff, ever informed of these efforts?

Mr. HELMS. I don't know what the Warren Commission knew Mr. Dodd. I didn't inform them of these things, but they had among them as members Mr. Allen Dulles, who was certainly aware of what had been going on with respect to Cuba; Senator Russell of Georgia, the chairman of the Oversight Committee, who was also aware of what was going on with respect to Cuba; Mr. McCone who was director at the time, also knew what was happening. What the Commission knew from those gentlemen I don't know. I never spoke to them myself about it.

Mr. DODD. But you never did personally?

Mr. HELMS. I never did.

Mr. DODD. I would like to draw your attention if I could to page 22 of your now declassified August 9, 1978, testimony before this committee written, you stated and I will quote--do you have a copy of the report in front of you?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I do. What page is this?

Mr. DODD. Page 22.

Mr. HELMS. I am on 22.

Mr. DODD. On line 9. Does your copy read, "The only assassination plot that had any semblance of substance to it"--I am quoting your response now to Mr. Goldsmith's question--"was one involving a couple of Mafia chieftains and which were supposed to have taken place before the Bay of Pigs."

Is that an accurate reflection of your views?

Mr. HELMS. As far as I know, it is an accurate statement. I would make essentially the same statement today.

Mr. DODD. Before proceeding with the line of questioning on that, may I ask who these Mafia organized crime chieftains were?

Mr. HELMS. My recollection--I would like to point out that there were two times in which different people were in touch with the Mafia. One happened before I was aware that this was going on and which was the episode that was referred to by Colonel Edwards and Mr. Houston when they saw the Attorney General.

The second one, which I never characterized as an assassination plot because as far as I knew it never went anywhere, was a second one involving the the Mafia, the one

which I have on public television apologized for and said it was the greatest mistake of my life to have had anything to do with it and I am sorry about it. But I have

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never had any convincing evidence from any human being today that this plot ever went anywhere.

I think just to make myself quite explicit here, I would want to see the information that said that I had any indication from William Harvey that his operation with Rosselli ever produced anything in Havana. I would like some evidence of this. I would like a statement under oath from somebody other than a Mafia chieftain.

Mr. DODD. I will go back to my question again. The first relationship existed prior to your direct involvement, is that right?

Mr. HELMS. That is right.

Mr. DODD. This is prior to the May 7, 1962, meeting referred to by Colonel Edwards and Mr. Houston?

Mr. HELMS. That is right, and therefore I don't know the details of it.

Mr. DODD. Am I correct in assuming that the names referred to in the report Mr. Rosselli, Mr. Giancana, that those were the principals involved. Were there others that you were aware of?

Mr. HELMS. I believe there were others. I thought there was a fellow named Trafficante involved but I am not sure about that. He maybe came into the picture later.

Mr. DODD. I do recognize that you have made a public apology and I preface my questions to you with that in mind. But could you tell this committee who the individuals were that you happened to be involved with on the second set of circumstances involving Mafia chieftains or organized crime figures?

Mr. HELMS. As far as I am aware in that particular situation it was William K. Harvey who was in touch with John Rosselli, and it was Harvey and Rosselli who were attempting to find, if I understood it correctly, some channel from Florida into Havana.

I also understand that there was a question of poison pills which were supposed to be transported to Havana. There was never any evidence they were ever transported there or ever left the United States. There was never any evidence that this plot ever left the Florida mainland. If it was indeed an assassination plot, it was misadvertised to me, because I had understood it was an effort to see if a connection could be made between the Mafia in Florida and the Mafia in Havana. To the best of my knowledge, the connection never was made.

Mr. DODD. Other than Mr. Harvey and Mr. Rosselli, was there anyone else that would fall into the character of being members of organized crime that you had direct contact with?

Mr. HELMS. I had direct contact with none of--the only gentleman I had direct contact with myself was Harvey, who was a staff officer. I never met Mr. Rosselli. I never met Mr. Giancana. If I met a Mafia chieftain, I wasn't aware of it.

Mr. DODD. Am I to understand that Mr. Giancana was also involved in this

second.

Mr. HELMS. I don't think he was. It was not my understanding that he was. But then I have no way of demonstrating that, Mr. Dodd. The Mafia has its own internal organization, and who Rosselli talked to I don't know.

Mr. DODD. Going back again to the statement that I read from page 22 of your declassified testimony before this committee, "The only assassination plot that had any semblance or substance was

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the one involving a couple of Mafia chieftains." I would like to, refer to JFK exhibit F-527. I would ask the clerk to supply Mr. Helms with a copy of that exhibit.

And I would ask you, Mr. Helms, if you would take a look over this exhibit with particular emphasis on the last paragraph of what is page 2 of the exhibit, page 3, to the top of page 4, ending with the paragraph that ends at the top of page 4. Take a minute to look at that.

I am not asking that you read it out loud but just that you familiarize yourself with the contents of this exhibit.

Mr. HELMS. I have read that now.

Mr. DODD, Is it fair to assume you recognize this document? You have seen it before?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I have.

Mr. DODD. Am I correct in stating this is the CIA's Inspector General's report done in 1967----

Mr. HELMS. The one that I asked to have done.

Mr. DODD. The one you asked to have done as DCI, Director of the Agency?

Mr. HELMS. Right.

Mr. DODD. I don't intend to read all of this but beginning at the last sentence on page 2 of the Inspector General's report it reads as follows:

We can identify five separate phases in agency assassination planning although the transitions from one to another are not always sharply defined. Each phase is a reflection of the then prevailing government attitude toward the Cuban regime.

Without reading each one of them, the inspector General's report prepared at your request, then outlines in separate paragraphs, from A to E, five separate phases, as they describe, and using their language again in "agency assassination planning."

I would like to know, first of all, how you can explain that we have in a report prepared for you in 1967 what appears to me to be five separate areas of assassination planning and how that can be distinguished from your statement to this committee in executive session where you talk about basically one or the semblance of one assassination attempt involving organized crime figures. Can you please enlighten the

committee as to how you can reach two separate---

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I can. I think this is rather lurid language that has been used in this report. As I read through it, this looks like the efforts that were made during this time to upset the Castro regime. If one identifies that as assassination planning, I don't think that is a proper description of it, and if somebody will come forth with all the items that are supposed to have been in that planning, I would be delighted to hear it.

Mr. DODD. They identify here one period beginning prior to August 1960, That is the first one. The second one is August 1960 to April 1961. The third is April 1961 late 1961.

Mr. HELMS. Aren't those all the same one?

Mr. DODD. That is my question for you. The Inspector General seemed to distinguish between the various phases here, and according to your testimony before us, is this what you were referring to? Is this what you are calling one, what they call five?

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Mr. HELMS. That is right. I became involved with this business sometime in 1962 after I took over as DDP. I've forgotten what month. Anything prior to that I didn't have anything to do with. I would assume this was one plot but maybe there were others. But if there are, in all the time I spent with the Church committee and all the time I have spent endlessly for the last 3 or 4 years, it seems to me, about these matters, I haven't had anything else brought to my attention. And if you gentlemen have something, I would like to know it. But I don't know what it is and I am sorry I can't help.

Mr. DODD. Did you take issue with this report 11 years ago at the time it was issued?

Mr. HELMS. Mr. Dodd, when I got this report I had some problems with respect to reporting to President Johnson about certain points that he was particularly interested in. I did not attempt to parse it or analyze it or get it changed or do anything with it except use it as a fact-finding document.

I want to say right now that I never expected to see the document in the public domain declassified for the appetites of all those who wanted to make the most of it, and therefore if I had known this, I obviously would have edited the report and changed it rather substantially, put it in the hands of lawyers and had it entirely rearranged.

Mr. DODD. I say to you, Mr. Helms, with all due respect, it is not being put into evidence to satisfy the voracious appetites of anyone but merely to try to clear up a point we are trying to resolve here. I hope you don't understand---

Mr. HELMS. What is the point you would like to resolve?

Mr. DODD. As someone who is just confronted, I am not an expert in these matters but I read your transcript and you said, "The only assassination plot that had any semblance of substance was the one involving a couple of Mafia chieftains."

Mr. HELMS. And that is what I believe to this date.

Mr. DODD. I am confronted with an Inspector General's report which was not

written to satisfy the appetites of anyone I presume. It is a declassified document which says, "We can identify five separate phases." I am merely asking you to clarify that in light of the earlier statement. That is the only purpose for this being brought into testimony.

Mr. HELMS. I am sorry. For example, it says here that particular scheme-- which scheme? Is this the Mafia thing that we are talking about?

Mr. DODD. That is correct.

Mr. HELMS. And was again pushed vigorously in the area of Mongoose and in the climate of intense administration pressure to do something about Castro and Cuba. Are we talking about the same. Mafia thing here as well? If that is a lot of plots, I regard it as one and the same operation. And if I am misleading you in some fashion--

Mr. DODD. Maybe I can help you. Is it one and the same in your mind because it involved Cuba and Fidel Castro, and that was one entity?

Mr. HELMS. The only one that I know about that was that seemed to have been taken seriously was the one involving

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Rosselli and Harvey. I believe the Church committee brought out---found a wetsuit, a clam shell, various things that were on the shelf in the agency that were regarded as things that might be used in possibly killing Castro, or being used against him, which never came off the shelf, were never used. If that is a plot to have created this, then I will back up and say we ought to enumerate every single item that conceivably had to do with the invasions of Cuba which we were constantly running under government aegis. We had task forces that were striking at Cuba constantly. We were attempting to blow up powerplants, we were attempting to ruin sugar mills, we were attempting to do all kinds of things during this period. This was a matter of American Government policy. This wasn't the CIA alone.

Now, if those things taper over into assassination plots, maybe so. I find the semantics the English incendiary but not very clear and not very clarifying, and not very specific.

Mr. DODD. Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous consent that exhibit JFK F-527 be entered into the record at this time.

Mr. PREYER. Without objection, JFK F-527 is entered into the record at this point.

[Whereupon exhibit JFK F-527 was received in evidence.]

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
Washington, D.C. 20505

Office of Legislative Counsel

20 September

1978

G. Robert Blakey
Chief Counsel and Director
House Select Committee on Assassinations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Blakey:

Attached you will find pages 1-8, 14, 17-18, 24-25, 57-59, 62a-63, 94, 118, 130-133 from the report by the Inspector General on plotting against Castro. These pages have been sanitized and declassified in compliance with a request by Mr. Goldsmith, and may be used by you in your hearings.

It should be noted that it is Agency policy to not release reports of the Inspector General outside the Agency, in order to protect the unique fact-finding advisory function that they fulfill within the Agency. Were the internal confidentiality of the reports to be compromised the effectiveness of the function could be impaired. Because so much of the information from the 1967 report was placed officially in the public domain by the interim report of the Church Committee, Alleged Assassination Plots Involving-Foreign Leaders, it can be released in this form on this special occasion.

Sincerely yours,

S.D. Breckinridge
Principal Coordinator, HSCA

encl.

JFK EXHIBIT F-527 cont.

April 1967

MEMORANDUM

This reconstruction of Agency involvement in plans to assassinate Fidel Castro is at best an imperfect history. Because of the extreme sensitivity of the operations being discussed or attempted, as a matter of principle no official records were kept of planning, of approvals, or of implementation. The few written records that do exist are either largely tangential to the main events or were lost on paper from memory years afterward. William Harvey has retained skeletal notes of his activities during the years in question, and they are our best source of dates.

_____ of the Office of Medical Services, has a record of whom he met and when and cryptic references to the subjects discussed, _____ of TSD, has a record of two or three dates that are pertinent. _____ and _____ were involved in only the technical aspects of operational planning, and their participations were short-lived. Although fragmentary, their records are a help in establishing critical time frames. Operational files are useful in some instances, because they give dates of meetings, the substances of which may be inferred from collateral information.

For the most part, though, we have had to rely on information to us orally by people whose memories are fogged by time. Their recollections of dates are particularly hazy, and some of them

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JFK EXHIBIT F-527 cont.

are no longer able to keep the details of one plan separate from those of another. We interviewed everyone whom we could identify as likely

to be knowledgeable, with the exceptions of Mr. Dulles and General Cabell. A complete list is attached at Tab A. We did not go on fishing expeditions among the mere possibles. To have done so have risked making witting a number of employees who were previously unwitting and; .in our estimate; would have added little to the details available from those directly involved. There are inconsistencies among the various accounts, but most of them can be resolved by collating the information furnished by all of the identifiable participants in a particular plan and by then checking it against specific dates that can be fixed with fair certainty. We believe that this reconstruction of what happened and of the thinking associated with it is reasonably sound. If there are significant inaccuracies in the report, they are most likely to occur in faulty ordering of the sequence of events. People still remember much of what happened; but they can no longer recall precisely when.

It became clear very early in our investigation that the vigor with which schemes were pursued within the Agency to eliminate Castro personally varied with the intensity of the U.S. Government's efforts to overthrow the Castro regime. We can identify five separate phases in Agency assassination planning, although the transitions from one

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to another are not always sharply defined. Each phase is a reflection of the then prevailing Government attitude toward the Cuban regime.

a. Prior to August 1960: All of the identifiable schemes prior to about August 1960, with one possible exception, were aimed only at discrediting Castro personally by influencing his behavior or by altering his appearance.

b. August 1960 to April 1961: The plots that were hatched in late 1960 and early 1961 were aggressively pursued, and were viewed by at least some of the participants as being merely one aspect of the over-all active effort to overthrow the regime that culminated in the Bay of Pigs.

c. April 1961 to late 1961: A major scheme that was begun in August 1960 was called off after the Bay of Pigs and remained dormant for several months, as did most other Agency operational activity related to Cuba.

d. Late 1961 to late 1962: That particular scheme was reactivated in early 1962 and was again pushed vigorously in the era of Project MONGOOSE and in the climate of intense administration pressure on CIA to do something about Castro and Cuba.

e. Late 1962 until well into 1963: After the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 and the collapse of Project MONGOOSE, the

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aggressive scheme that was begun in August 1960 and revived in April 1962 was finally terminated in early 1963. Two other plots were originated in 1963, but both were impracticable and nothing ever came of them.

We cannot overemphasize the extent to which responsible agency
Kennedy

officers felt themselves subject to the ^ administration's severe pressures to do something about Castro and his regime. The fruitless and, in retrospect; often unrealistic plotting should be viewed in that light.

Many of those we interviewed stressed two points that are so obvious that recording them here may be superfluous. We believe, though, that they are pertinent to the story. Elimination of the dominant figure in a government, even when loyalties are held to him personally rather than to the government as a body, will not necessarily cause the downfall of the government. This point was stressed with respect to Castro and Cuba in an internal CIA draft paper of October 1961, which was initiated in response to General Maxwell Taylor's desire for a contingency plan. The paper took the position that the demise of Fidel Castro, from whatever cause, would offer little opportunity for the liberation of Cuba from Communist and Soviet Bloc control. The second point, which is more specifically relevant to our investigation, is that bringing about the downfall of a government necessarily requires the removal of its leaders from

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positions of power, and there is always the risk that the participants will resort to assassination. Such removals from power as the house arrest of a--Mossadeq or the flight of a Batista should not cause one to overlook the killings of a Diem or of a Trujillo forces encouraged but not controlled by the U.S. Government.

There is a third point, which was not directly made by any of those we interviewed, but which emerges clearly from the interviews and from review of files. The point is that of frequent resort to synecdoche--the mention of a part when the whole is to be understood, or vice versa. Thus, we encounter repeated references to phrases such as "disposing of Castro", which may be read in the narrow literal sense of assassinating him, when it is intended that it be read in the broader, figurative sense of dislodging the Castro regime. Reversing the coin, we find people speaking vaguely of "doing something about Castro" when it is clear that what they have specifically in mind is killing him. In a situation wherein those speaking may not have actually meant what they seemed to say or may not have said what they actually meant, they should not be surprised if their oral than was intended.

The suggestion was made to us that operations aimed at the assassination of Castro may have been generated in an atmosphere stress in intelligence publications on the possibility of Castro's

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demise and on the reordering of the political structure that would follow. We reviewed intelligence publications from 1900 through 1966.

The NIE's on "The Situation and Prospects in Cuba"
* * * * * have brief paragraphs on likely successor
Castro were to depart the scene.

In each case the treatment is no more nor less than one would expect to find in comprehensive round-ups such as these. We conclude that there is no reason to believe that the Operators were unduly influenced by the content of Intelligence publications.

Drew Pearson's column of 7 March 1967 refers to a reported CIA plan in 1963 to assassinate Cuba's Fidel Castro. Pearson also has information, as yet unpublished, to the effect that there was a meeting at the State Department at which assassination of Castro was discussed and that a team actually landed in Cuba with pills to used in an assassination attempt. There is basis in fact for each of those three reports.

- a. A CIA officer passed an assassination weapon to an Agency Cuban asset at a meeting in Paris on 22 November 1963. The weapon was a ballpoint pen rigged as a hypodermic syringe.

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The CIA officer suggested that the Cuban asset load the syringe with Black Leaf 40. The evidence indicates that the meeting was under way at the very moment President Kennedy was shot.

- b. There was a meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) in Secretary Rusk's conference room on 10 August 1962 at which Secretary McNamara broached the subject of liquidation of Cuban leaders. The discussion resulted in a Project MONGOOSE action memorandum prepared by Edward Lansdale. At another Special Group meeting on 31 July 1964 there was discussion of a recently-disseminated Clandestine Services information on a Cuban exile plot to assassinate Castro. CIA had refused the exile's request for funds and had no involvement in the plot.

- c. CIA twice (first in early 1962 and again in early 1962) supplied lethal pills to U.S. gambling syndicate members working in behalf of CIA on a plot to assassinate Fidel Castro. The 1961 plot aborted and the pills were recovered. Those furnished in April 1962 were passed by the gambling syndicate representative to a Cuban exile leader in Florida, who in turn had them sent Cuba about May 1962. In June 1962 the exile leader reported that a team of three men had been dispatched to Cuba to recruit for the operation. If the opportunity presented itself, the team would make an attempt on Castro's life--perhaps using the pills.

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This report describes these and other episodes in detail; puts them into perspective; and reveals, that while the events described by Drew Pearson did occur and are subject to being patched together as though one complete story, the implication of a direct, causative relationship among them is unfounded.

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Gambling Syndicate

The first seriously-pursued CIA plan to assassinate Castro had its inception in August 1960. It involved the use of members of the criminal underworld with contacts inside Cuba. The operation had two phases: the first ran from August 1960 until late April or early May 1961, when it was called off following the Bay of Pigs; the second ran from April 1962 until February 1963 and was merely a revival of the first phase which had been inactive since about May 1961.

Gambling Syndicate - Phase 1

August 1960

Richard Bissell, Deputy Director for Plans, asked Sheffield Edwards, Director of Security, if Edwards could establish contact with the U.S. gambling syndicate that was active in Cuba. The objective clearly was the assassination of Castro although claims that there was a studied avoidance of the term conversation with Bissell. Bissell recalls that the idea originated with J.C. King, then Chief of WH Division, although King now recalls having had only limited Knowledge of such a plan and at a much later date--about mid-1962.

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same way. A memorandum for the record prepared by Sheffield on 14 May 1962 states: "No monies were ever paid to Roselli and Giancana. Maheu was paid part of his expense money during the periods that he was in Miami. (Giancana is "Gold.")

* * * * * was introduced (in true name) to Roselli as an employee of Maheu, the explanation being that * * * * * would handle the case for Maheu, because Maheu was too busy to work on it full time himself. No one else in the Office of Security was made witting of the operation at this time. Edwards himself did not meet Roselli until the summer of 1962.

At this point, about the second half of September, Shef Edwards told Bissell that he had a friend, a private investigator, who had a contact who in turn had other con%acts through whom syndicate elements in Cuba could be reached. These syndicate elements in Cuba would be willing to take on such an operation. As of the latter part of September 1960, Edwards, * * * * *, and Bissell were the ones in the Agency who knew of a plan against Castro involving U.S. gangster elements. Edwards states that Richard Helms was not informed of the plan, because Cuba was being handled by Bissell at that time.

With Bissell present, Edwards briefed the Director (Allen Dulles) and the DDCI (General Cabell) on the existence of a plan involving members of the syndicate. The discussion was circumspect; Edwards

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deliberately avoided the use of any "bad words." The descriptive term used was "an intelligence operation." Edwards is quite sure that the DCI and the DDCI clearly understood the nature of the operation he was discussing. He recalls describing the channel as being from A to B to C." As he then envisioned it, "A" was Maheu, "B" was Roselli, and "C" was the principal in Cuba. Edwards recalls that Mr. Dulles merely nodded, presumably in understanding and approval. Certainly, there was no opposition. Edwards states that, while there was no formal approval as such, he felt that he clearly had tacit approval to use his own judgment. Bissell committed \$150,000 for the support of the operation.

(Comment: In the light of this description of the it is appropriate to conjecture as to what the Director did approve. It is safe to conclude, given the men participating and the general subject of the meeting, that there was little likelihood of misunderstanding--even though the details were deliberately blurred and the specific intended result was never stated in unmistakable language. It is also reasonable to conclude that the pointed avoidance of "bad words" emphasized to the participants the extreme sensitivity of the operation.)

During the week of 25 September 1960, * * * * * and Maheu went to Miami where Roselli introduced only Maheu to "Sam Gold" at a meeting

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tying it to a recollection that Castro frequently drank tea, coffee, or bouillon, for which a liquid poison would be particularly well suited.

January - February 1961

Despite the decision that a poison in liquid form would be most desirable, what was actually prepared and delivered was a solid in the form of small pills about the size of saccharine tablets * * * *

remembers meeting with Edwards and * * * * * in Edwards' office to discuss the requirement. The specifications were that the poison be stable, soluble, safe to handle, undetectable, not immediately acting, and with a firmly predictable end result. Botulin comes nearest to meeting all of those requirements, and it may be put up in either liquid or solid form. * * * * * states that the pill form chosen because of ease and safety of handling.

(Comment: The gangsters may have had some influence on the choice of a means Of assassination. * * * * * says that in his very early discussions with the gangsters (or, more precisely, Maheu's discussions with them) consideration was given to possible ways of accomplishing the mission. Apparently the Agency had first thought in terms of a typical, gangland-style killing in which Castro would be gunned down. Giancana was flatly opposed to the

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use of firearms. He said that no one could be recruited to do the job, because the chance of survival and escape would be negligible. Giancana stated a preference for a lethal pill that could be put into Castro's food or drink. Trafficante (the courier") was in touch with a disaffected Cuban official with access to Castro and presumably of a sort that would enable him to surreptitiously poison Castro. The gangsters named their man inside as * * * * * who was then * * * * *
* * * * *

The gangsters said that * * * * * had once been in a position to receive kickbacks from the gambling interests, had since lost that source of income; and needed the money.)

When Edwards received the pills he dropped one into a glass of water to test it for solubility and found that it did not even disintegrate, let alone dissolve. * * * * * took them hack and made up a new hatch that met the requirement for solubility. Edwards at that point wanted assurance that the pills were truly lethal. He called on * * * * * to make an independent test of them. Edwards gave * * * * * money to buy guinea pigs as test animals. * * * * * has a record of a conversation with * * * * * on 6 February 1961. It may have

related to the tests, but we cannot be sure. What appears to have happened is that * * * * * tested the pills on the guinea pigs and found them ineffective.

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JFK EXHIBIT F-527 cont.

Gambling Syndicate - Phase 2

William Harvey, Chief of * * * * * was briefed In February 1961 (by authority of Richard Bissell) on phase one of the gambling syndicate operation. That briefing was in connection with a sensitive operation that Bissell had assigned to Harvey. Harvey describes it thus: 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 easy 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. He mentioned the Edwards/gambling syndicate operation against Castro in that context; but he now thinks that the operation was over by then and that reference to it was in terms of a past operation as a case in point. It was on this basis that Harvey arranged to be briefed by Edwards. Harvey's fixing of the date as February was only after review of events both preceding the briefing and following it. He says now that it might have been as early as late January or as late as March 1961.

After some discussion of the problems involved in developing an Executive Action Capability, Bissell palced Harvey in charge of the effort. Harvey says that Bissell had already discussed certain aspects

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of the problem with * * * * * and with * * * * *. Since * * * * * was already cut in, Harvey used him in developing the Executive Action Capability, although never with respect to Castro. We did not question * * * * * on his knowledge of the program for creating an Executive Action Capability, but Harvey's mention of him

JFK EXHIBIT F-527 cont.

briefed the DDCI, General Carter, who said he understood the situation and in due time might brief the Director, Mr. McCone. It is not known whether General Carter did or did not brief Mr. McCone. There is no indication that General Carter was further briefed on the full details of the assassination plot against Castro.

May 1962

The Attorney General obviously was told of CIA's operational involvement with gangster elements, because he requested a briefing on the details. On May 1962 Sheffield Edwards and Lawrence Houston met with Attorney General Robert Kennedy and, as Edwards puts "briefed him all the way." Houston says that after the briefing Kennedy "thought about the problem quite seriously." The Attorney General said that he could see the problem and that he could not proceed against those involved in the wiretapping case. He spoke quite firmly, saying in effect, "I trust that if you ever try to do business with organized crime again--with gangsters--you will let the Attorney General know before you do it." Houston quotes Edwards as replying that this was a reasonable request. Edwards says that among the points covered was that of Roselli's motivation. The Attorney General had thought that Roselli was doing the job (the attempt at assassination of Castro) for money. Edwards corrected that impression; he was not.

JFK EXHIBIT F-527 cont.

Houston recalls that during the meeting with the Attorney General the latter asked for a memorandum record of the meeting. Edwards believes that the request was made later and by telephone. A memorandum was prepared and was signed by Edwards. Both Edwards and Houston recall having had a hand in writing it. A transmittal buck-

ship from Houston to Kennedy notes that the request was made on 11 May, which suggests that Edwards is correct in his belief that the request was made by telephone after the 7 May briefing of the Attorney General. The memorandum is dated 14 May 1962- It was typed in two copies only with the original being sent to Attorney General Kennedy and the other copy being retained by the Director of Security. It typed by Edwards' secretary, * * * * *. It does not state the purpose of the operation on which Kennedy was briefed, but it does make it clear that the operation was against Castro and its true purpose may be inferred from the memorandum.

Edwards states that the briefing of the Attorney General and the forwarding of a memorandum of record was canned out without briefing the Director (John McCone), the DDCI (General Carter), or the DD/P (Richard Helms). He felt that, since they had not been privy to the operation when it was under way, they should be protected from involvement in it after the fact. As noted previously, Houston had briefed the DDCI on the fact that there was a matter involving the

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out of the meeting * * * * and AMLASH were informed that President Kennedy had been assassinated. * * * * was visibly moved over the news. He asked, "Why do such things happen to good people?" The contact report does not state the time nor the duration of the

AMLASH meeting, but it is likely that at the very moment President Kennedy was shot a CIA officer was meeting with a Cuban agent in Paris and giving him an assassination device for use against Castro. * * * * states that he received an OPIM cable from FitzGerald that night or early the next morning telling him that everything off. We do not find such a cable in the AMLASH file. There is a record in the file that * * * * was due to arrive back in Washington at 1810 hours, 23 November.

The AMLASH project was probably about as widely known within the Clandestine Services as any other project of a similar nature. However, we can identify only four people who how of the just-described episode involving a hypodermic syringe and Black Leaf 40. * * * * knew all of the story, * * * * knew most of it, * * * * much of it. Fitzgerald did not mention this aspect of the AMLASH operation when he first briefed us on it. When we went back him later with specific questions, he said he remembered something about Black Leaf 40, but nothing ,whatever about a device for

administering it. * * * * * said he had the impression that FitzGerald

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(Text in book turn sideways)

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him on the Pearson story.

d. Pearson, Anderson, and Greenspun (in Los Vegas) are newspapermen with a newsworthy story. Pearson has already published much of it.

e. Maheu does have good reason for not wanting aired further. Unfavorable publicity might cause him to lose his lucrative client, Howard Hughes. There might be some value to be gained from endorsing his suggestion that he approach * * * * * and perhaps Roselli and urge discretion.

What do other components of Government know about this operation?

Former Attorney General Robert Kennedy was fully briefed by Houston and Edwards on 7 May 1962. A memorandum confirming the

oral briefing was forwarded to Kennedy on 14 May 1962. The memorandum does not use the Word "assassinate," but there is little room for misinterpretation of what was meant. Presumably the original of that memorandum is still in the files of the Justice Department. It should be noted that the briefing Of Kennedy was restricted to Phase One of the operation, which had ended about a year earlier. Phase Two was already under way at the time of the briefing, but Kennedy was not told of it.

As far as we know, the FBI has not been told the sensitive

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operational details, but it would be naive to assume that they have not by now put two and two together and come out with the right answer. They know of CIA's involvement with Roselli and Giancana as a result of the Lag Vegas wiretapping incident. From the Chicago newspaper stories of August 1963, and from Giancana's own statement; it appears that they know this related to Cuba. When Roselli's story reached them (Roselli to * * * * * to pearson to Warren to the FBI), all of the pieces should have fallen into place. They should by now have concluded that CIA plotted the assassination of Castro and used U.S. gangster elements in the operation.

There is some support for this thesis in The conversation I had with Sam Papich on 3 May 1967 when I told him of the expected meeting. between Roselli and Harvey. Sam commented that Roselli and Giancana have CIA "over a barrel" because of "that operation" He said that he doubted that the FBI would be able to do anything about either Roselli or Giancana because of "their previous activities with your people."

Can we plausibly deny that-we plotted with gangster elements to assassinate Castro?

No, we cannot. We are reasonably confident that there is nothing in writing outside of the Government that would confirm Pearson's

JFK EXHIBIT F-527 cont.

story of the gambling syndicate operation; but there are plenty of non-gangster witnesses who could lend confirmation.

a. Maheu can confirm that Shef Edwards told Roselli that Edwards had told the Attorney General of Roselli's activities on behalf of the Government.

b. * * * * * can confirm the pill and three-man team elements of the story.

c. * * * * * can confirm the pill element of Phase One.

d. If an independent investigation were to be ordered, the investigators could learn everything that we have learned[. Such an investigation probably would uncover details unknown to us, because it would have access to the non-CIA participants.

Can CIA state or imply that it was merely an instrument of policy?

Not in this case. While it is true that Phase Two was carried out in an atmosphere of intense Kennedy administration pressure to do something about Castro such is not true of the earlier phase. Phase One was initiated in August 1960 under the Eisenhower administration. Phase two is associated in Harvey's mind with the Executive Action Capability, which reportedly was developed in response to White House urgings. Again; Phase One had been started and abandoned months before the Executive Action Capability appeared

JFK EXHIBIT F-527 cont.

on the scene.

When Robert Kennedy was briefed on phase One in May 1962; he strongly admonished Houston and Edwards to check with the Attorney General in advance of any future intended use of U.S. criminal elements. This was not done with respect to Phase Two, which was already well under way at the time Kennedy was briefed. The Pearson story, which is now causing us so much distress, includes

one detail that is found only in Phase Two: the three-man team.

What measures might be taken to lessen the damage?

We see little to be gained from personal approaches now to Maheu, * * * * *, or Roselli. Maheu has much to lose and might be able to prevail upon * * * * * and Roselli not to spread the story further. It is questionable whether any such urging would be effective with Roselli, because Roselli stands only to gain from having the story of his CIA connection known and accepted. We cannot now suppress the story, because it is already out and may boil up afresh from the Garrison case. If we were to approach any of the participants and urge discretion upon him, and if this became known, it would merely lend credence to a tale that now sounds somewhat improbable.

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Mr. DODD. Mr. Helms, did John McCone, former Director of Central Intelligence Agency and your immediate supervisor, know about--I gather you don't care for the word assassination plots and I am trying to find some words you and I can agree on. Let's call them efforts to get rid of Fidel Castro. Does that satisfy you?

Mr. HELMS. Fine.

Mr. DODD. Did John McCone know about the agency's efforts to get rid of Fidel Castro?

Mr. HELMS. He certainly was on top of all the operations that we mounted against Cuba. He was in the vanguard of this. He attended most of the committee meetings, he pushed certainly as hard as anyone in the administration to see if we couldn't topple the Castro regime. I believe he has testified to the effect that he did not know of what he called specific efforts to kill Castro. I don't know whether he knew about it or not. I will accept his word. I have no reason to argue with him about it. There was a big flareup at the time of the Church committee hearings over whether I had told McCone about this or whether I had told Harvey not to say anything about it. I don't have any clear recollection any more of the events surrounding that particular detail, so I cannot help you on it. I would be glad to if I could.

Mr. DODD. So you don't know when he would have been informed, if he had been?

Mr. HELMS. Then I believe he had Mr. Elder, who was his executive assistant his--

Mr. DODD. I am having a hard time hearing.

Mr. HELMS. I am sorry. During the Church committee hearings Mr. Elder, who had been his executive assistant, swore out an affidavit that he had been instructed by McCone to tell me that anything smacking of assassination was not permissible to Mr.

McCone. Mr. Elder gave his testimony under oath. I never had any conversation with Mr. Elder like that, that I ever recall. As I have said on previous occasions and on the record, I have great regard for Mr. McCone. He was my boss. I would have no doubt whatsoever, if he had expressed himself in this fashion through one of his subordinates to me, that I would have remembered it. I think I would have remembered it. So the issue is unresolved.

Mr. DODD. For the purposes of clarity can we talk about these efforts to get rid of Fidel Castro in terms of pre-Bay of Pigs and post-Bay of Pigs? I think for our purposes that might be of some help.

Mr. HELMS. Certainly.

Mr. DODD. Did I understand you to say that you are not sure he knew about either the pre-Bay of Pigs or the post-Bay of Pigs efforts or that he knew about the pre-Bay of Pigs and didn't know about the post-Bay of Pigs or knew about both?

Mr. HELMS. I thought on one occasion I told him about the pre-Bay of Pigs episode because my recollection is that something appeared in a newspaper--I think in the Chicago Sun Times---about it, and I went and spoke to him about it and told him what was involved.

As to the post-Bay of Pigs, I don't know what he knew. You know, Mr. Dodd, I am not looking for refuge in these matters. I am

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prepared to stand here and take my beating in any form that you gentlemen want to administer it.

Mr. DODD. We are not out to beat anyone. We are just trying to get at the facts.

Mr. HELMS. I am delighted to hear you say that. But let me just explain as Director of the agency Mr. McCone had every opportunity to find out anything in the agency that he wanted to find out. He had an inspection staff, he had executive assistants, he had all kinds of people around him. So what he knew and what he didn't know on a given date I can't possibly attest to, but I do want to make the point that nobody was stopping him from finding out anything he wanted to find out.

Mr. DODD. In the Church committee report which I have marked here as JFK exhibit F-539, reading at the bottom:

Mr. McCone testified that he was not aware of the plots to assassinate Castro which took place during "the years in which he was DCI, Director of Central Intelligence and that he did not authorize those plots. He testified that he was not briefed about the assassination plots by Dulles, Bissel, Helms, or anyone else when he succeeded Dulles as Director in November 1961.

Do you take issue with that?

Mr. HELMS. No, I am not going to take issue with it. I would simply end up in

a lengthy hassle between me and Mr. McCone. I have better ways to spend my time.

Mr. DODD. So you would agree with Mr. McCone's testimony that he was not briefed?

Mr. HELMS. I have no basis for agreeing or disagreeing Mr. Dodd.

Mr. DODD. Can you think of any reason why you might not have briefed him.

Mr. HELMS. When he came aboard as Director I was not the Deputy Director of Plans. It was Mr. Bissell who was the Deputy Director of Plans, and Allen Dulles was the Director. Dulles left, McCone took his place, and Bissell continued on as Deputy Director of Plans for a time.

Mr. DODD. When you became Deputy Director of Planning in 1962, can you think of any reason why you would not have told Mr. McCone?

Mr. HELMS. The episode, the pre-Bay of Pigs episode, I did talk to him about one day, I know.

Mr. DODD. So you did inform him of the pre-Bay of Pigs effort?

Mr. HELMS. Yes. That was not when he came in 1961; it was after that, so I guess if you parse the statement, the statement is accurate.

Mr. DODD. Mr. Chairman, I would ask that JFK exhibit F-539 be entered into the record at this time.

Mr. PREYER. Without objection, JFK exhibit F-539 is entered in the record at this point.

[Whereupon, JFK exhibit F-539 was received in evidence.]

[The information follows:]

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Mr. DODD. If I told you August 3 or August 1963 is when Mr. McCone believes that he was informed by you of the pre-Bay of Pigs efforts, would you argue with that date?

Mr. HELMS. Is that when that story came out in the Sun Times? Because that is the only thing I can key it to.

Mr. DODD. That is what he states, and I just wondered if you would argue with that.

Mr. HELMS. No, certainly not.

Mr. DODD. Mr. Chairman, I will ask that JFK F-538 be entered in the record at this time as well.

Mr. PREYER. Without objection, JFK exhibit F-538 is admitted into evidence at this point.

[Whereupon, JFK exhibit No. F-538 was received in evidence.]

[The information follows:]

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Mr. DODD. Mr. McCone testified he did not know about authorized plots. Helms, Bissell, and Harvey all testified that they did not know whether McCone knew of the assassination plots. Each said, however, he did not tell McCone of the assassination efforts either when McCone assumed the position of DCI in December 1961 or at any time thereafter until August 1963. So that would have been the first time Mr. McCone was aware of any of these efforts?

Mr. HELMS. I think that is plausible. I can accept that.

Mr. DODD. These would have been the efforts that were pre-Bay of Pigs?

Mr. HELMS. That is my recollection of that particular episode, yes.

Mr. DODD. Did you ever talk with the Warren Commission or anyone on the Warren Commission staff about these efforts to get rid of Castro?

Mr. HELMS. No, sir. I might point out in fairness to all concerned that that was not my function in those days. If anybody was going to be briefing the

Warren Commission about ongoing operations of any kind in the CIA, it would have been the Director or with the Director's authority.

Mr. DODD. In other words, you talked about these plots to no one who had any connection whatsoever with the Warren Commission?

Mr. HELMS. Not that I know of; no.

Mr. DODD. I would like to, if I could, refer to page 17--I hope we have the same copies--of the now declassified August 9 executive session testimony that you gave before this committee.

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I have page 17.

Mr. DODD. You can read along with me. Mr. Helms is responding to a question by Mr. Goldsmith.

Mr. HELMS. Excuse me, did you say you wanted me to read it?

Mr. DODD. No. I will read it and you may read along with me.

On the bottom of page 16:

Mr. GOLDSMITH. Did the agency's investigation reflect any working hypotheses?

By that, did the agency give any particular emphasis to the particular areas, geographic areas?

Mr. HELMS. I think that the entire U.S. Government, not only the CIA was very concerned as to whether there would be evidence of some foreign conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy. They were concerned

whether the Soviets were involved in this. They were concerned whether the Cubans were involved in this. They were concerned that somebody may have been involved in it.

Then dropping to the next paragraph, second sentence:

There is hardly any question there was more discussed during those days as to who was behind Lee Harvey Oswald, if indeed he was the man who was responsible, what had affected his life, why had he done the things he had done, and so forth.

Then dropping down to the last paragraph here on this page beginning with the sentence:

I think if the Chair would indulge me a minute, I would like to make a comment about the various investigations into the assassination of President Kennedy based on the long years I have spent in the intelligence business, and that is, until the day that the KGB in Moscow or the Cuban intelligence in Havana is prepared to turn over their files to the United States as to what their relationships to these various people were, it is going to be extraordinarily difficult to tidy up this case, finally and conclusively.

It seems to me that the question of possible Cuban complicity was, according to your testimony, on the minds of a lot of people.

This was not something that came up later, but right at the very time. Isn't that correct? In fact, this morning you said in response to a question from Chairman Stokes that you certainly were aware that the alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald had sought a visa at the Cuban Embassy in Mexico. Is that correct?

Mr. HELMS. Yes.

Mr. DODD. And you were aware that the alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald had lived for more than 2 years in the Soviet Union; is that correct?

Mr. HELMS. Right.

Mr. DODD. And you were aware that Lee Harvey Oswald had passed out Fair Play for Cuba materials in New Orleans; is that correct?

Mr. HELMS. I believe it is.

Mr. DODD. In light of all-of that knowledge, in light of the obvious interest and emphasis that the entire U.S. Government had on the possible activities of the Cuban Government, and in light of the fact that you knew that Lee Harvey Oswald had engaged in these activities, why didn't you tell the Warren Commission about the efforts to get rid of Fidel Castro or to overthrow the Cuban Government?

Mr. HELMS. Mr. Dodd, you are singling me out as to why I didn't march up and tell the Warren Commission when these operations against Cuba were known to the Attorney General of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the President of the United States himself although he at that point was dead. All kinds of people knew about these operations high up in the Government. Why am I singled out as the fellow who should have gone up and identified a Government operation to get rid of Castro? It was a Government wide operation, supported by the Defense Department, supported by the National Security Council, supported by almost everybody in a high position in the Government.

Mr. DODD. According to your earlier testimony you have made note of the fact and I think the record indicates that the Attorney

General had asked that be stopped. I presume he was told that they would be. So far as he was concerned, they had ended.

Mr. HELMS. What about some connection with the Mafia? But the efforts to unseat Castro under Operation Mongoose had gone on full blast under the Attorney General's direction and we had the Cuban missile crisis in October of 1962. If the Cuban missile crisis with the connivance of Fidel Castro and the Soviet leaders had been a success, those missiles would have been introduced to Cuba and the United States would have been hostage to those missiles of the Soviets. It would have been the coup of the century.

In December of 1962 the brigade comes back to the United States

having been bought off with drug supplies by the Attorney General, et cetera. President Kennedy went to the Orange Bowl in Miami and greeted them in December 1962 and assured them, and this may not be an exact quote, as follows: "I will return this banner to this brigade in a free Havana"

Those operations went on nonstop during 1963. If that doesn't indicate there was bad blood between President Kennedy and Fidel Castro, I don't know what does.

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Mr. DODD. But my point is this, according to your testimony, Mr. McCone was not aware of the post-Bay of Pigs efforts and attempts. Robert Kennedy, the then Attorney General, asked that all activities such as that be stopped. Mr. McCone is not aware. I can't ask you why others who had knowledge of this, did not communicate it to the Warren Commission.

But as I read your executive committee testimony, you felt you had, not the link with the Warren Commission but had a very active role in communicating with the Warren Commission. That doesn't help me in trying to understand why you would not have made that information available and known to the Warren Commission.

Mr. HELMS. Well, I am sorry, I didn't.

Mr. DODD. In retrospect, do you think it was relevant?

Mr. HELMS. In retrospect, Mr. Dodd, I would have done a lot of things very differently. I would like to point out something since we are so deeply into this. When one government is trying to upset another government and the operation is successful, people get killed. I don't know whether they are assassinated or whether they are killed in a coup. We had one recently in Afghanistan. The head of the Afghanistan Government was killed. Was he assassinated or killed in a coup? I don't know.

These semantics are all great. I want to say there is not a chief of state or chief of government in the world today who is not aware of the fact that his life is in jeopardy. He takes every possible protection to guard himself. The relevance of one plot or another plot and its effect on the course of events I would have a very hard time assessing and I think you would, too.

Suppose I had gone down and told them and said, yes, you know we tried to do this. How would it have altered the outcome of the Warren Commission proceeding?

Mr. DODD. Wasn't that really for the Warren Commission to determine?

Mr. HELMS. I think that is absolutely correct, but they did not have that chance apparently.

Mr. DODD. That is right.

Mr. HELMS. I don't want to take the sole blame for the fact that they didn't have that chance.

Mr. DODD. I am not asking you to.

Mr. HELMS. Well, the implication of the hearing is to that effect.

Mr. DODD. You have to take these things in the entire context. This is not the only hearing we are having. Prior to the issuance of the Warren Commission's report, did the Agency at any time have any documents or other information which might have indicated that Mr. Castro may have known about some of these efforts to get rid of him?

Mr. HELMS. I don't know that. I have heard these allegations flying around. I don't know whether they are accurate or not. I have heard allegations of newspaper stories that Mr. Castro knew or didn't know. Eminent Senators of the United States have taxed me with the fact they knew that Castro knew Mr. Cubela was a double agent. Mr. Cubela gets up in Havana not long ago and says Mr. Castro did not know he was a double agent; and

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testified to this committee that he didn't know he had any connections with the CIA.

Who is right in all of this?

Mr. DODD. That is what we are trying to find out.

Mr. HELMS. Well, I can't contribute anything.

Mr. DODD. Was there any effort to investigate whether or not Castro or the Cuban Government was aware of these efforts?

Mr. HELMS. Well, I think that we used what few resources we had in Cuba. But after all, you must remember that the whole object of this exercise at the time was to get intelligence on Cuba of any kind and it was turning out to be extraordinarily difficult and the U.S. Government made a major effort to get intelligence on Cuba during this period of months.

Mr. DODD. I am not in any way trying to be harassing, Mr. Helms, when I ask these questions. But you stated earlier that there were other people that were aware of these efforts to get rid of Castro and that they might have had a responsibility as well to communicate that to the Warren Commission.

Mr. HELMS. Well, they might have communicated to the Warren Commission the operations that were being run against Cuba which were certainly advertised to the Cubans because people began getting arrested. I mean, task forces would land. The people would be arrested. I have no doubt they were interrogated. Therefore, Castro knew these efforts were being made against him.

Now, if you want to single out the assassination plot involving the Mafia as one thing and you want to circumscribe it and separate it from all these other things, exactly who knew about it and who might have told the Warren

Commission, I am not dead certain.

Mr. DODD. I want to try to determine, if I could, whether or not it was a conscious decision on your part not to inform the Warren Commission, or was it just something that you didn't think should be done at the time?

Mr. HELMS. It never occurred to me. We never talked to anybody outside the Agency about covert operations of any kind--that perhaps was a mistake--except to the Senate and House Committees to whom we reported.

Mr. DODD. But as I understand your statement, you believe today that that was a mistake?

Mr. HELMS. I think it was a mistake, no doubt about it. I think we should have shoved the whole thing over. I would have backed up a truck and taken all the documents down and put them on the Warren Commission's desk.

Mr. DODD. I notice in your executive testimony and earlier today in previous testimony it was your position that the the Warren Commission information only in reponse to the Commission's requests.

Mr. HELMS. Basically that was the case. I imagine that if anything came into the Agency which seemed to be of fundamental interest to them, we would have volunteered it, but basically we felt our role was to respond to Warren Commission requests and not to try and get out in front of them or to try and second-guess them or anything else. I mean the Commission.

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Mr. DODD. But fundamentally it was on a request basis. You were not necessarily volunteering information?

Mr. HELMS. That is right.

Mr. DODD. I would like to refer you to JFK exhibit F-520. I would ask the clerk to give Mr. Helms a copy of that exhibit, so that he has it in front of him.

[The information follows:]

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Mr. DODD. This exhibit, Mr. Helms, is dated May 11, 1964. It is a memorandum that was prepared for your review. The subject of the memorandum is information regarding Lee Harvey Oswald provided to the CIA by a Cuban defector.

Mr. HELMS. Which part of it, Mr. Dodd, would you like me to look at?

Mr. DODD. Do you recall the document? Just looking at it, does it refresh your memory?

Mr. HELMS. I had better look at it a little more carefully. I have no doubt it is in my packet of papers. Yes, sir, I have been through it now.

Mr. DODD. And you recognize this as a memorandum that was prepared for your review and it does involve information regarding Lee Harvey Oswald provided to the CIA by a Cuban defector?

Mr. HELMS. Yes.

Mr. DODD. All right. I will read paragraphs 3 and 4 here if you want to follow along with me, beginning on paragraph 3:

We have the problem of reconciling the operational exploitation of blank--

The name having been sanitized here--

and satisfying the responsibilities we have undertaken with Mr. Rankin, blank is such an operational gold mine that Mr. Blank wants at a maximum 2 months to work fully. It is palpable, however, that we must furnish to the Commission the substance of blank.

It looks like.

Then paragraph 4:

It is recommended that the DDP in turn or via a designee, preferably the former, discuss the blank situation on a very restricted basis with Mr. Rankin at his earliest convenience, either at the Agency or at the Commission headquarters. Until this takes place, it is not desirable to put anything in writing.

Doesn't this language here indicate that in this particular instance anyway, the Agency was contemplating volunteering this defector's information to the Warren Commission Without a specific request from the Commission itself?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I think that is right sir. That is what it looks like to me.

Mr. DODD. Let me ask you this: Why did you feel in this case that the Commission should be privy to this information? Why did you volunteer this information?

Mr. HELMS. Well, I can only assume from reading this, since I don't have any independent recollection of exactly what this defector was saying, that it was so obvious to all of us that it would be of interest to the work of the Commission that we wanted to get it in their hands.

In saying earlier today that we reacted both to the time and in response to questions, I didn't mean to imply that we never volunteered anything, particularly if it seemed that the Commission ought to have it, at least in our judgment it seemed that the Commission ought to have it.

Mr. DODD. I noticed earlier today in response to Mr. Stokes' question you voluntarily went, I presume, to the Chief Justice at the time and communicated to him about the reliability of Nosenko's testimony with regard to Oswald?

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Mr. HELMS. Yes, sir, it was certainly voluntary because we were very concerned at the time.

Mr. DODD. These were pieces of information that the Warren Commission would not on its own have had access to as a result of their own work?

Mr. HELMS. I think that is correct.

Mr. DODD. And certainly it was as well, a conscious decision on the part of the Agency and yourself that both of these pieces of information were relevant to the investigation by the Commission?

Mr. HELMS. That is correct, Mr. Dodd.

Mr. DODD. Now I come back again, Mr. Helms---I suppose it is a constant difficulty I have. I can see and appreciate why you would feel that the defector's information was relevant. I can certainly see why the question of the reliability of Mr. Nosenko with regard to his information with regard to Oswald was relevant.

I have this terrible problem of trying to understand why, albeit today you recognize it was a mistake, but why--when you back in 1964 recognize the relevancy of those two pieces of information----there was a lack of understanding as to the relevancy of attempts on our part to destabilize or get rid of Fidel Castro. That is the difficulty I have.

Mr. HELMS. I can understand your difficulty Mr. Dodd. I am just sorry. It is an untidy world.

Mr. DODD. Other than the anti-Castro assassination plots, was there any other information pertaining to a possible mode or means or opportunity to kill the President that you are aware of and that Warren Commission was not told about?

Mr. HELMS. I am sorry, I don't get the---

Mr. DODD. Other than the assassination plots. We know about the defector, you volunteered that. We had the voluntary turning over of the opinion with regard to Nosenko. We know today we didn't turn over relevant information with regard to these efforts to get rid of Castro.

Are there other things that you can recall that might have had relevancy--things of importance, to the Warren Commission's investigation of the assassination of an American President.

Mr. HELMS. Well, I don't know of any others. I can't think of what they might have been, but then we might have been guilty of some other errors of omission, I don't know. None come readily to mind. This didn't come readily to mind at the time.

Mr. DODD. You said earlier that you informed President Johnson of the anti-Castro plots or the efforts to get rid of Castro.

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I did.

Mr. DODD. Do you recall when he would have become aware of that?

Mr. HELMS. I guess he became aware of it when I told him, although I believe there were some allegations in a column by Drew Pearson. Yes, I think that is correct, that there was a column by Drew Pearson and then maybe some lawyer in town, 3 friend of his, made some mention of this to President Johnson. It was responsive to this inquiry from him that I gave him the information.

Mr. DODD. And he was told specifically about the CIA's efforts to get rid of Castro?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, he was.

Mr. DODD. Was he told specifically about the CIA--organized crime connection?

Mr. HELMS. That is the thing we were talking about. It was about the operations to get rid of Castro. They were ongoing even in his administration.

Mr. DODD. Let me ask you when that would have been? I think in your executive testimony you said May 10, 1967.

Mr. HELMS. If that is what I said in the executive testimony, I believe that to be the correct date on which I did this. That is my belief. I did my best to reconstruct when it was, in recent times. If it is a mistake, it is a mistake, but it is an honest one. It is my recollection of when I did this.

Mr. DODD. Is it further your testimony that President Johnson so-called AMLASH.

Mr. HELMS. I gave him what I recollect is a good fill-in on what we were trying to do. The AMLASH operation was a political action operation to get a political grouping together to unseat Castro. I recognized it in one of the documents, because the other day in this group of documents, some officer in the Cuban operations testified to the fact that that was referred to consistently in the group as an assassination operation. That is not my recollection of the case. It was not an assassination operation or designed for that purpose.

I think that I do know what I am talking about here, but there are other witnesses to that. Mr. FitzGerald is dead, but there are other gentlemen who worked with him at the time.

Mr. DODD. As you said in your earlier testimony, it is semantics that we are having trouble with.

Mr. HELMS. If you are the target there is a great deal of difference whether somebody is thinking of doing something to you 10 miles from here and actually doing something. I don't mean to indulge too much in semantics, but it is a question of whether anything happened or not.

Mr. DODD. That is not the question. We are talking about what was planned to happen.

Mr. HELMS. The AMLASH operation was designed to try and get a political action operation and a military operation to get rid of Castro. It was he who kept saying that the fastest way to do this is to kill the man. But this didn't mean that the Agency was interested in that aspect of the thing and the primary reason for being in touch with him was quite the opposite. We were trying to do various things to rein him in.

Mr. DODD. It was not suggested that there be a democratic election to unseat Castro?

Mr. HELMS. I should say not. But if you go through the records of those years, you will find it was the whole U.S. Government was behind this one.

Mr. DODD. Well, could you distinguish this one, then, from the other ones? You didn't want to characterize the other efforts as assassination plots or efforts to single out and get rid of Castro? This one you describe as more of a political operation. I am having a difficult time distinguishing the earlier ones if they are to be distinguished.

Mr. HELMS. Well, I think it goes back, Mr. Dodd, to what I was saying a few minutes ago where one government mounts operations to unseat another government, at what point does what word become what word. You are trying to unseat them and you are trying to unseat them by the means at your disposal. Some may be shooting with guns. Others will take off and go to the hills. Others might be that you could arrest them and put them in jail. You know this as well as I do. It is the history of the world. There are coups constantly going on.

All I am trying to say is the U.S. Government had a policy for many months of trying to mount a coup against Fidel Castro.

Mr. DODD. I would like to draw your attention to JFK-527. I would ask the clerk to show the witness, Mr. Helms, a copy of this exhibit.

Mr. Helms, as they bring it over to you, this is page 94 of the CIA's 1967 Inspector General's report. Do you have a copy of it there?

Mr. HELMS. Yes, I do. I think this is correct. Is this about the AMLASH meeting?

Mr. DODD. There you go; that is the proper one. Again, just to make sure I understood you, your testimony was that you didn't consider AMLASH to be an assassination plot? It was more of a political operation?

Mr. HELMS. That is right.

Mr. DODD. OK. Now let me read the section where you identified the document. I am reading what is underlined here, and I think for the purpose of the record it is important to note that the underlining was done by the InspectorGeneral It was not done by the committee.

It is likely that at the very moment President Kennedy was shot, a CIA officer was meeting with a Cuban agent in Paris and giving him an assassination device for use against Castro.

Now, again, I am reading from the same report that we read from earlier. They are calling it an assassination device. Are we getting semantical here again?

Mr. HELMS. No. I think the device, that was a hypodermic with some kind of poison in it---

Mr. DODD. I am having a hard time hearing you, Mr. Helms.

Mr. HELMS. I believe it was a hypodermic Syringe they had given him with something called Black Leaf-40 in it. This was in response to AMLASH request that he be provided with some sort of a device whereby he could kill Castro. He returned this device on the spot to the case officer. The case officer brought it back to Washington and that was the end of the plot.

Mr. DODD. OK, but for purposes of discussion, the officer gave this Cuban, this agent in Paris, a device with that material you described in it. I presume the material, if injected into a human being, would kill him; is that right?

Mr. HELMS. I would think so, yes.

Mr. DODD. So the officer gives the Cuban agent the device to kill

somebody.

Mr. HELMS. I am sorry he didn't give him a pistol, because it would have made the whole thing a lot simpler and less exotic.

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Mr. DODD. Well, whether it is a pistol or a needle, if AMLASH is a political plot to destabilize the government, what in the blazes are we giving an agent a device to kill Castro for if it is not an assassination plot?

Mr. HELMS. Well, if you want to have it that way, why don't you just have it that way.

Mr. DODD. It is not what I want.

Mr. HELMS. I think it is what you want.

Mr. DODD. I am reading to you from reports prepared at your request by the Inspector General. I'm not fabricating, I am quoting.

Mr. HELMS. I understand that.

Mr. DODD. Well, it is not a question of what I want. It is a question of what this committee would like to know. and the committee is not satisfied, I don't believe, at this point as to exactly what the characterization of AMLASH was.

Mr. HELMS. Well, I have told you what I believe the characterization of AMLASH to be.

Mr. DODD. What does that have to do with this?

Mr. HELMS. Because we gave him a gun or hypodermic syringe or whatever the case may be at his request because he had aims on Castro. If that is your definition of an assassination plot, then have it that way. It is quite satisfactory with me.

Mr. DODD. But it is your characterization that it would not be---

Mr. HELMS. No; it is not. He didn't accept the weapon. If we gave him a gun and he gave it back there is no way he was going to make an assassination or murder with that particular device, was there?

Mr. DODD. It is not a question of what he wanted to do. It is what we were trying to do by giving him this device. That is what I am driving at.

Mr. HELMS. Is it important? I thought you had Mr. Cubela testifying that they never even knew he was in touch with the CIA. So how is it relevant to the hearings of this committee let alone the Warren Commission?

Mr. DODD. I would suggest to you that it might be relevant, if, in fact, Mr. Castro was aware of the fact that we were engaging in an activity designed to cause his early demise.

Mr. HELMS. Well, if he didn't know it, he could have guessed it.

Mr. DODD. To the best of your knowledge, Mr. Helms, was the AMLASH operation well, I guess called in in-house jargon a secure operation an

operation where to your knowledge there were not any leaks.

Mr. HELMS. The allegations I believe have been made by some officer connected with it that he felt there had been leaks.

Mr. DODD. I am sorry. I didn't hear you.

Mr. HELMS. The allegation I believe has been made by some officer connected with the operation that there were leaks, that it was not a secure operation. The merits of that allegation I do not know. I know that the Senate committee seemed to feel that this was the case and I believe they came to the conclusion that it was a double agent operation.

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I never believed that it was a double agent operation. I am now supported by Mr. Castro and Mr. Cubela I don't know whether that support gives me any solace or not.

Mr. DODD. Just a second ago you said even if he didn't know, he could have guessed anyway.

Mr. HELMS. Sure.

Mr. DODD. I will ask that JFK exhibit F-527 be entered into the record at this point.

Mr. FITHIAN [presiding]. Without objection it is admitted.

[JFK exhibit F-527 was entered previously.]

Mr. DODD. Mr. Helms, I would like to show you JFK exhibit F-512. This is an affidavit that was prepared by an individual who no longer works with the Agency. The name at the top is a fictitious name, not his real name.

Mr. HELMS. That is known in the jargon as a cryptonym.

Mr. DODD. Then, Joseph H. Langosch is a cryptonym. This individual is a person who has extensive experience in counterintelligence matters related to CIA operations against Cuba.

In fact, quoting from his background here, he worked for the Agency from 1955 to 1968. During 1963, he functioned in two capacities as a CIA officer, the first capacity being as Special Assistant to the Chief of the Special Affairs staff, and the second capacity being as the Chief of Counterintelligence for the Special Affairs staff.

During 1963, the Special Affairs staff was the CIA staff responsible for CIA operations directed against the Government of Cuba and the Cuban intelligence services and that as Chief of Counterintelligence for the Special Affairs staff he was responsible for safeguarding the Special Affairs staff against penetration by foreign intelligence services, particularly the Cuban Intelligence Service. So he was directly involved here on page 4.

Mr. HELMS. He is the man I was talking about a few moments ago when I said somebody identified with the operation made the allegation that this

was an assassination plot. The gentleman may have heard somebody say this, but I had not heard anybody say it. I had occasion to ask if this was the common talk in the SAS staff from someone else who was there in a high position and I am told it was not.

So, I don't know the merits of the case. I have no reason to put the man down on his affidavit, but on the other hand this was not my understanding of it.

Mr. DODD. Well, for the purpose of the record, for the other committee members who may not be aware of his statement in the affidavit, he says that the AMLASH operation might have been an insecure operation prior to the assassination of President Kennedy because it was highly possible that as of 1962 the Cuban Intelligence Services had knowledge of the CIA's association with persons involved in the AMLASH operation, including AMLASH 1, also known as blank, and that the information which led him to doubt the security of the AMLASH operation prior to the assassination of President Kennedy was available to senior level CIA officials, including Desmond FitzGerald. And the last paragraph states that the AMLASH operation prior to the assassination of President Kennedy was characterized by the Special Affairs staff, Desmond

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FitzGerald, and other very senior CIA officials, as an assassination operation initiated and sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. HELMS. It is interesting to me that a man who is so close to Mr. FitzGerald spells his name wrong.

Mr. DODD. How do you spell the name?

Mr. HELMS. It has a capital G.

Mr. DODD. That may not be his fault. That may be the stenographer's fault.

Mr. HELMS. But he has all kinds of initials in the margin here in which he made certain corrections. He would have had the opportunity to take note of that, too, I would think.

Mr. DODD. We will take note of that. Obviously, you have had some experience..in intelligence Work. Would you like to comment on this aside from that?

Mr. HELMS. You know, it is an interesting fact that this committee knows more about the truth of the assertions than I do because you have talked to Cuban officials. The meeting in Cuba at which Cubela testified has occurred within the last 2 or 3 months, and I imagine in the two trips that this committee has made to Havana--at least the newspapers tell me it has been two trips--you have had a chance to satisfy yourself perhaps as to whether the operation was insecure or not.

The Cuban position seems to indicate that it was secure that they did not know about it That is why I say it is interesting. I have nothing to contribute

myself. I don't know whether it was insecure or not. I can only tell you, though, that intelligence officers are just as human as most people and the fellow who doesn't feel that maybe he was properly appreciated at one time in his career is always glad to get back at his superiors by saying he was the one who was right and they were the ones who were wrong.

Mr. DODD. Fine. Mr. Chairman, at this point I would terminate my line of questioning and turn back the balance of my time.

Thank you, Mr. Helms.

Mr. HELMS. Thank you, Mr. Dodd. Thank you very much.

Mr. FITHIAN. We were not sure, Mr. "Dodd, that you had a balance of time, but we do want to thank you for your exhaustive questioning.