

OLC #78-1966

IND

February 28, 1978

Central Intelligence Agency
Gene F. Wilson
Information and Privacy Coordinator

IPS REGISTRY
F78-0404
EK/CT

Dear Mr. Wilson:

This letter is in response to the documents retain by this agency in connection to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. This letter is to also acknowledge the receipt of the copy of the Index, and the copies of the II photographs.

In relation to your first letter dated 26 October 1977, you stated that "we have compiled an Index, some 310 pages. . ." The Index I had obtained is 272 pages with the last page beening the break-down of documents of the different U.S. agencies. I would appreciate if you would clarify the exact number of pages.

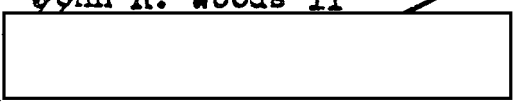
In regard to the Index it has help provide me with the additional information I had requested in my first letter to some degree. I hope the additional information will help the CIA to locate the items I requested. The 150 photographs taken by Kramer and Naman during their trip in Russia in August of 1961 is mention in a CIAMemorandum to the FBI of March 20, 1964, and again in the Index as 607-818 of 19 April 1964.

Concerning my statements about the reasons why the II photographs should be declassified, I would appreciate if you would inform me of which department of this agency I should contact regarding these documents.

At this time I am also inquiring into obtaining documents relating to the CIA unit named "Health Aleration Committee."

Thank you for your time and help.

Sincerely yours,
John R. Woods II
John R. Woods II



ALTERATION

Is this a proper word or a misspell?

Yes (New request).
I wouldn't know who to search. Try OWS.

MAR 7 8 31 AM '78

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Available

94th Congress 1st Session	SENATE	REPORT No. 485
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**ALLEGED ASSASSINATION PLOTS
INVOLVING FOREIGN LEADERS**

AN INTERIM REPORT

OF THE
**SELECT COMMITTEE
TO STUDY GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

WITH RESPECT TO
**INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES
UNITED STATES SENATE**

TOGETHER WITH
**ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENTAL AND SEPARATE
VIEWS**



NOVEMBER 20 (legislative day, NOVEMBER 18), 1975

C. INSTITUTIONALIZING ASSASSINATION: THE "EXECUTIVE ACTION" CAPABILITY

In addition to investigating actual assassination plots, the Committee has examined a project known as Executive Action which included, as one element, the development of a general, standby assassination capability. As with the plots, this examination focused on two broad questions: What happened? What was the extent and nature of authorization for the project?

1. INTRODUCTION

Sometime in early 1961, Bissell instructed Harvey, who was then Chief of a CIA Foreign Intelligence staff, to establish an "executive action capability," which would include research into a capability to assassinate foreign leaders.¹ (Bissell, 6/9/75, p. 51; Harvey, 6/25/75, pp. 36-37) At some point in early 1961 Bissell discussed the Executive Action capability with Bundy. The timing of that conversation and whether "the White House" urged that a capability be created were matters on which the evidence varied widely, as is discussed in section (2) below.

Bissell, Harvey and Helms all agreed that the "generalized" capability was never used. (Bissell 6/9/75, p. 87; Harvey 6/25/75; p. 45; Helms 6/13/75, p. 52)

¹ During the late spring or early summer of 1960, Richard Bissell had requested his Science Advisor, Mr. Joseph Scheider, to review the general "capability of the clandestine service in the field of incapacitation and elimination." Scheider testified that assassination was one of the "capabilities" he was asked by Bissell to research. (Scheider, 10/9/75, pp. 5-6, 24-25)

Scheider indicated that Bissell turned to him because he was knowledgeable about "substances that might be available in CIA laboratories" and because Bissell would have considered it part of his job as his technical aide." (id., 6).

Also prior to this time, there had been an internal CIA committee which passed on proposals involving the operational use of drugs, chemicals and biological agents. The purpose of this Committee is suggested by the following incident:

In February 1960, CIA's Near East Division sought the endorsement of what the Division Chief called the "Health Alteration Committee" for its proposal for a "special operation" to "incapacitate" an Iraqi Colonel believed to be "promoting Soviet bloc political interests in Iraq." The Division sought the Committee's advice on a technique, "which while not likely to result in total disablement would be certain to prevent the target from pursuing his usual activities for a minimum of three months." (id., 6)

"We do not consciously seek subject's permanent removal from the scene; we also do not object should this complication develop." (Memo, Acting Chief N.E. Division to DC/CI, 2/25/60.)

In April, the Committee unanimously recommended to the DDP that a "disabling operation" be undertaken, noting that Chief of Operations advised that it would be "highly desirable." Bissell's deputy, Tracy Barnes, approved on behalf of Bissell. (Memo, Deputy Chief CI to DDP, 4/1/62)

The approved operation was to mail a monogrammed handkerchief containing an incapacitating agent to the colonel from an Asian country. Scheider testified that, while he did not now recall the name of the recipient, he did remember mailing from the Asian country, during the period in question, a handkerchief "treated with some kind of material for the purpose of harassing that person who received it." (Scheider Affidavit, 10/20/75; Scheider, 10/9/75, pp. 52-55; 10/18/75, pp. 55-56.)

During the course of this Committee's investigation, the CIA stated that the handkerchief was "in fact never received (if, indeed, sent)." It added that the colonel "suffered a terminal illness before a firing squad in Baghdad" (an event we had nothing to do with) not very long after our handkerchief proposal was considered." (Memo, Chief of Operations, N.E. Division to Assistant to the SA/DDO, 9/28/75.)

DULLES:

*A Biography of Eleanor, Allen,
and John Foster Dulles
and Their Family Network*

by Leonard Mosley

The Dial Press/James Wade
New York 1978



currency for paying for covert operations in Saigon, Pnom Phen, and Vientiane? It sounded like a hark back to the beginning of the century, when the British had used opium in China to buy their way in and make the mandarins rich and the masses supine as they tightened their colonial grip on the country. Yet the skeptics who protested that Americans—even American intelligence agents—could never stoop so low were confounded. It was only too true. The CIA was spreading drugs and corruption through Asia, and the stench of evil was beginning to cling to the Agency's name.

At home in the United States peoples' attitudes had begun to turn against the Republican Party and the principles it stood for. The gungho anti-communism of the early Dulles years was beginning to seep away in the twilight of the Eisenhower administration, and the President had lost prestige over the U-2 affair. Despite his clownish and boorish behavior in Paris, there was little disposition to blame Krushchev or the Russians for breaking off the summit,⁹ and a tendency instead to whisper that a CIA conspiracy had sabotaged the most promising international conference of the decade.

Whether he was slowing down or not, Allen still liked to be involved in, or in close touch with, the more bizarre operations in which the Agency was engaged. He would turn up at the CIA training farm in Virginia to watch recruits performing and sit in on the polygraph (lie detector) tests to which they and all Agency operators were subjected at regular intervals. He was particularly shocked when one pretty girl operative displayed obvious signs of being a lesbian, and asked why she was still in the service when male homosexuals were dismissed, once they were discovered.

"Because no one blackmails lesbians," said the unit officer crisply. "Anyway, it means she never falls in love with the guys she's working on."

"But what if she suddenly meets the right man and becomes normal?" Allen asked. "A pretty girl like that—she can't remain a lesbian all her life."

Once his enthusiasm had been for the CIA's production of gadgetry: bugs, flashless pistols, exploding candles, miniature radios and tape

⁹The fact that the Soviet government had launched a space satellite to overfly Europe and the United States on the same day that Krushchev complained of the U-2's intrusions into Russia was largely ignored by both the media and the public.

recorders. But now he was interested in the more sinister Agency experiments in mind-bending drugs, portable phials of lethal viruses and esoteric poisons that killed without trace. Allen's sense of humor was touched when he learned that the unit working on these noxious enterprises was called the Health Alteration Committee (directed by Dr. Sidney Gottlieb and Boris Pash), and he added to his collection of CIA curios a noiseless gun which the committee had produced for firing darts smeared with LSD, germs, or venom at enemy agents or foreign personalities whose existence the CIA was hindering embarrassing.

Richard Bissell was meticulous in briefing Allen in all the operations in which he was engaged. Bissell had now succeeded Frank Wisner as deputy director of Plans, which meant that he was in charge of all clandestine operations; and though he was no less zealous in promoting them, he was a much blander personality and rather more cynical than his predecessor.

Quite a few years had passed since he had scored his first success by helping overthrow the Jacob Arbenz régime in Guatemala and substituting one more amenable to the directors of United Fruit. Since that time Bissell had thought a great deal about the efficacy of such operations, and had begun to be dubious about the results they were likely to achieve.

It was not that he was morally against clandestine operations or the Agency's sponsorship of movements to overthrow Communist régimes. But he had begun to wonder whether they were worth while in the long run for the welfare of the United States.

"Guatemala was a complete success in the sense that the tactical objective was achieved," he said later. "It was done more or less on time and on budget. But all you could hope to do in a paramilitary operation like Guatemala was to place in power a friendly individual. Whether, having placed a friendly political leader in power and having got rid of Communist influences, you can then turn the situation around in the country concerned is open to question. We got Arbenz out. We substituted Armas. But I think most people would argue that from the day he was installed nobody has been able to make much of a success of Guatemala."

To Allen Dulles the CIA was still the knight in shining armor riding the white charger of the United States to the rescue of the ideologically