

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 my 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," adding:

"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, 9/26/75.)

"Executive Action" was a CIA euphemism, defined as a project for research into developing means for overthrowing foreign political leaders, including a "capability to perform assassinations." (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 34) Bissell indicated that Executive Action covered a "wide spectrum of actions" to "eliminate the effectiveness" of foreign leaders, with assassination as the "most extreme" action in the spectrum. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 32) The Inspector General's Report described executive action as a "general standby capability" to carry out assassination when required. (I.G. Report, p. 37) The project was given the code name ZR/RIFLE by the CIA.¹

A single agent ("asset") was given the cryptonym QJ/WIN, and placed under Harvey's supervision for the ZR/RIFLE project. He was never used in connection with any actual assassination efforts. Helms described QJ/WIN's "capability":

If you needed somebody to carry out murder, I guess you had a man who might be prepared to carry it out. (Helms, 6/13/75, p. 50)

Harvey used QJ/WIN, to spot "individuals with criminal and underworld connections in Europe for possible multi-purpose use." (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 50) For example, QJ/WIN reported that a potential asset in the Middle East was "the leader of a gambling syndicate" with "an available pool of assassins." (CIA file, ZR/RIFLE/Personality Sketches) However, Harvey testified that:

During the entire existence of the entire ZR/RIFLE project * * * no agent was recruited for the purpose of assassination, and no even tentative targeting or target list was ever drawn. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 45)

In general, project ZR/RIFLE involved assessing the problems and requirements of assassination and developing a stand-by assassination capability; more specifically, it involved "spotting" potential agents and "researching" assassination techniques that might be used. (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 11 and 6/9/75, p. 73; Harvey, 6/25/75, pp. 37-A, 45) Bissell characterized ZR/RIFLE as "internal and purely preparatory." (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 32) The 1967 Inspector General's Report found "no indication in the file that the Executive Action capability of ZR/RIFLE-QJ/WIN was ever used," but said that "after Harvey took over the Castro operation, he ran it as one aspect of ZR/RIFLE." (I.G. Report, pp. 40-41)

2. THE QUESTION OF WHITE HOUSE INITIATION, AUTHORIZATION, OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXECUTIVE ACTION PROJECT

Harvey testified that Bissell had told him that "the White House" had twice urged the creation of such a capability and the Inspector General's Report quoted notes of Harvey's (no longer in existence) to that effect. Bissell did not recall any specific conversation with the "White House," but in his initial testimony before the Committee he assumed the correctness of Harvey's notes and stated that, while he could have created the capability on his own, any urgings would have come from Bundy or Walt Rostow. In a later appearance, however, Bissell said he merely informed Bundy of the capability and that

¹ ZR/RIFLE was a cryptonym relating to two areas. One was the Executive Action assassination capability. The other ZR/RIFLE area is not part of the subject matter of this report. This second program was genuine, but it was also meant to provide a cover for any Executive Action operation. William Harvey had been in charge of the CIA section with general responsibility for such programs. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 49)

the context was a briefing by him and not urging by Bundy. Bundy said he received a briefing and gave no urging, though he raised no objections. Rostow said he never heard of the project.

William Harvey testified that he was "almost certain" that on January 25 and 26, 1961, he met with two CIA officials: Joseph Scheider, who by then had become Chief of the Technical Services Division, and a CIA recruiting officer, to discuss the feasibility of creating a capability within the Agency for "Executive Action." (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 52) After reviewing his notes of those meetings,¹ Harvey testified that the meetings occurred after his initial discussion of Executive Action with Bissell, which, he said, might have transpired in "early January." (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 52) When Bissell was shown these notes, he agreed with Harvey about the timing of their initial discussion. (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 10)

Harvey testified that the Executive Action capability was intended to include assassination. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 35) His cryptic handwritten notes of the January 25/26 meetings, preserved at the CIA, contain phrases which suggest a discussion of assassination: "last resort beyond last resort and a confession of weakness," "the magic button," and "never mention word assassination". Harvey confirmed this interpretation. (Harvey, Ex. 1, 6/25/75)²

The Inspector General's Report did not mention Harvey's notes, or their dates. However, in describing Bissell's initial assignment of the Executive Action project to Harvey, the Report referred to Harvey's notes, now missing, and which quoted Bissell as saying to Harvey, "the White House had twice urged me to create such a capability." (I.G. Report, p. 37) Harvey also testified that this "urging" was men-

¹ Harvey was asked whether his notations "25/1-Joes" and "26/1" indicate that he spoke to Joseph Scheider and the recruiting officer in 1961.

"Q: And is it your judgment that that is January 26, 1961 and is about the subject of Executive Action?"

"HARVEY. Yes, it is.

"Q: And it followed your conversation with Mr. Bissell that you have recounted?"

"HARVEY. * * * [W]ell, when I first looked at this, I thought this, well, this has got to be 1962, but I am almost certain now that it is not. If this is true, this might place the first discussion that I had with Dick Bissell in early January and this is difficult to pinpoint because there were several such discussions in varying degrees of detail during the period in the Spring, and very early in 1961 to the fall of 1961 period, but I did find out fairly early on that [the recruiting officer] had—or that Bissell had discussed the question of assassination with [the recruiting officer] and this discussion, at the very least, had to take place after I know Bissell already had discussed the matter with [him]." (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 52)

Harvey had also testified that, after receiving Bissell's initial instructions to establish an Executive Action capability:

"The first thing I did * * * was discuss in theoretical terms with a few officers whom I trusted quite implicitly the whole subject of assassination, our possible assets, our posture, going back, if you will, even to the fundamental questions of (a), is assassination a proper weapon of an American intelligence service, and (b), even if you assume that it is, is it within our capability within the framework of this government to do it effectively and properly, securely and discreetly." (Harvey, 6/25/75, pp. 37-A, 38)

The Inspector General's Report connected [the recruiting officer] and Scheider to the early stages of the Executive Action project as follows:

"Harvey says that Bissell had already discussed certain aspects of the problem with [the recruiting officer] and with Joseph Scheider. Since [the recruiting officer] was already cut in, Harvey used him in developing the Executive Action Capability * * *. Harvey's mention of him [Scheider] in this connection may explain a notation by [a CIA doctor] that Harvey instructed [the doctor] to discuss techniques with Scheider without associating the discussion with the Castro operation." (I.G. Report, pp. 37-38)

It is evident from the testimony of Harvey and Bissell that the turnover to Harvey of the RosSELL contact in November, 1961 was discussed as part of ZR/RIFLE (see Section (d), *infra*). Thus, their initial discussion of Executive Action can, at the least, be dated before November, 1961 and the "25/1" and "26/1" notations would have to refer to January, 1961.

² Harvey's notes also contained a phrase which suggests his concern that any U.S. assassination attempts might breed retaliation from other governments: "Dangers of RIS (Russian Intelligence Service) counter-action and monitor if they are blamed." (Harvey, Ex. 1, 6/25/75; Bissell, Ex. 1, 7/17/75)

tioned in his initial discussion of Executive Action with Bissell. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 37) However, the testimony from Bissell and from the White House aides is in conflict with Harvey's testimony as to whether such "urging" had in fact been given to Bissell.

The testimony regarding the relationship between "the White House" and the Executive Action capability is summarized as follows:

Harvey.—Harvey testified that his missing notes which had been destroyed had indicated that Bissell mentioned White House urgings to develop an Executive Action capability. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 37) Harvey said that he "particularly remember[ed]" that Bissell said that he received "more than one" urging from the White House. (Harvey, 6/25/75, pp. 36-37; 7/11/75, p. 59) As he testified:

"On two occasions or on more than one occasion, and I particularly remember the more than one because I recall at the time this was clear this was not just a one-shot thing tossed out * * * the White House—I quote this much; this is exact—had urged him (Bissell)—him in this case not personally, but the Agency—to develop an Executive Action capability." (Harvey, 6/25/75, pp. 36-37)

But Harvey had no direct evidence that Bissell actually had any such discussion with "the White House." No specific individual in the White House was named to Harvey by Bissell. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 31) Harvey said that it would have been "improper" for him to have asked Bissell whom he had talked to and "grossly improper" for Bissell to have volunteered that name. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 37)

Bissell.—Bissell specifically recalled assigning Harvey to investigate the capability. (Bissell, 6/9/75, p. 51) However, Bissell did not recall "a specific conversation with anybody in the White House as the origin" of his instruction to Harvey. (Bissell, 6/9/75, p. 51)

During the course of several appearances before the Committee, Bissell's testimony varied as to whether or not he had been urged by the White House to develop an Executive Action capability.

In his initial appearances before the Committee on June 9 and 11, 1975, Bissell made statements that tended to indicate that White House authorization had been given. In response to the "twice urged" quotation of Harvey's notes in the Inspector General's Report, Bissell said, "I have no reason to believe that Harvey's quote is wrong." (Bissell, 6/9/75, p. 51) Bissell also said that as far as he knew, it was true that he was asked by the White House to create a general stand-by assassination capability. (Bissell, 6/9/75, pp. 49, 51)

Based again on Harvey's missing notes ("White House urging"), and his statement that he had no reason to challenge their accuracy, Bissell initially gave his opinion that McGeorge Bundy and Walt Rostow were the two people from whom such a request was most likely to have come because they were "the two members of the White House staff who were closest to CIA operations." (Bissell, 6/9/75, pp. 49-54)

At another point in his initial testimony, Bissell said that the creation of the capability "may have been initiated within the Agency" (*Id.*, p. 81). Two days later he said: "There is little doubt in my mind that Project RIFLE was discussed with Rostow and possibly Bundy." (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 46)

When Bissell appeared before the Committee on July 17 and 22, his testimony, given in light of information obtained since his earlier ap-

pearances, was that there was no White House urging for the creation of the Executive Action project, although tacit approval for the "research" project was probably given by Bundy after it was established.

First, Bissell was shown the Harvey notes which had been preserved and which, without any mention of the White House, indicated Harvey had received his assignment prior to January 25/26, 1961. Those dates—just 5 days after the change in administration—made Bissell conclude that it was "very unlikely that that assignment to [Harvey] was taken as a result of White House urging or consultation." (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 10) Bissell said that Bundy did not have any influence at the Agency before the Presidential inauguration. Bissell added that he did not remember meeting with anyone in the new administration on matters prior to the inauguration. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 23)

Second, when he returned in July, Bissell also said he had been convinced by telephone conversations with Rostow and Bundy after his first appearances that since Rostow's duties in 1961 had nothing to do with covert action, he had "never discussed" Executive Action with Rostow. (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 10; 7/27/75, p. 22)

Bissell's final testimony about Bundy (given after his telephone contact with Bundy) was that he believed that he had informed Bundy about the capability after it had been created. (Bissell, 7/17/75, pp. 10-11; 7/22/75, pp. 21-22) But Bissell confirmed his original testimony that he had not briefed Bundy on the actual assassination plots against Castro already undertaken by the CIA. (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 47; 7/22/75, p. 31) Bissell was "quite certain" that he would not have expected Bundy to mention the Executive Action capability to the President. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 35) He testified:

Q. Would you think the development of a capability to kill foreign leaders was a matter of sufficient importance to bring to the attention of the President?

BISSELL: In that context and at that time and given the limited scope of activities within that project, I would not." (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 35)

Bissell said that he and Bundy had discussed an untargeted "capability" rather than the plan or approval for an assassination operation. (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 11) Bissell said that although he does not have a specific recollection, he "might have" mentioned Castro, Lumumba, and Trujillo in the course of a discussion of Executive Action "because these were the sorts of individuals at that moment in history against whom such a capability might possibly have been employed." (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 51)

Bissell said his impression was that in addition to expressing no unfavorable reaction to the project, Bundy actually might have given a more affirmative response. (Bissell, 7/22/75, pp. 25, 28) Bissell testified that he might have interpreted Bundy's reaction as approval (or at least no objection) for the Executive Action concept. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 30)

Q: * * * I think the testimony of this witness is going further in saying what you received from [Bundy] was, in your view, tantamount to approval?

BISSELL: I, at least, interpreted it as you can call it approval, or you could say no objection. He [Bundy] was briefed on something that was being done, as I now believe, on the initiative of the Agency. His [Bundy's] comment is that he made no objection to it. I suspect that his reaction was somewhat more favor-

able than that, but this is a matter that probably someone listening to the conversation on which such a person could have had differing interpretations. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 33)

All of the Bissell testimony on his Executive Action conversation with Bundy was speculative reconstruction. From his first appearance to his last, Bissell had no "clear recollection" of the events. (Bissell, 7/22/75, pp. 29, 36) But Bissell maintained that more "formal and specific and explicit approval would have been required" before any "actual overt steps in use of the capability." (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 31)

Bissell said that Harvey's notation about White House urgings to develop an Executive Action capability may have been a slightly confused account of a Bissell/Harvey conversation subsequent to the initiation of the project in which Bissell relayed Bundy's reaction to Harvey. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 25)

Bissell ultimately testified that the development of an Executive Action capability was "undoubtedly," or "very much more likely" initiated within the Agency. (Bissell, 7/22/75, pp. 22, 27) He had acknowledged on his first day of testimony that this would not have been unusual:

It was the normal practice in the Agency and an important part of its mission to create various kinds of capability long before there was any reason to be certain whether those would be used or where or how or for what purpose. The whole ongoing job of * * * a secret intelligence service of recruiting agents is of that character * * *. So it would not be particularly surprising to me if the decision to create * * * this capability had been taken without an outside request. (Bissell, 6/9/75, pp. 67-68)

Bundy.—McGeorge Bundy also testified to a conversation with Bissell, during which the Executive Action capability was discussed. Bundy's testimony comports with Bissell's on the fact that they discussed an untargeted capability, rather than an assassination operation. But Bundy said that the capability included "killing the individual." (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 5)¹ Bundy's impression was that the CIA was "testing my reaction," not "seeking authority." (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 15) Bundy said:

I am sure I gave no instruction. But it is only fair to add that I do not recall that I offered any impediment either. (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 10)

Bundy said that he did not take steps to halt the development of the Executive Action capability or "pursue the matter at all" (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 19) because he was satisfied.

That this was not an operational activity, and would not become such without two conditions: first, that there be a desire or a request or a guidance that there should be planning against some specific individual; and second, that there should be a decision to move against the individual. (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 7).

Bundy believed that neither of these conditions had been fulfilled. (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 7)

Bundy recalled the conversation with Bissell as taking place "some-time in the early months of 1961." (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 4) When questioned about the dates in Harvey's notes, Bundy rated the chance that his conversation about Executive Action took place before January

¹ See p. 157, *supra*, for Bundy's testimony about having a vague recollection of hearing about poisons in relation possibly to use against a large group of people in Cuba. But he did not connect this to the conversation about executive action.

25—when Harvey was already discussing the project at the CIA pursuant to Bissell's directive—as “near zero” because the new Administration had been in office less than a week and he had been preoccupied with other problems, including the Berlin crisis and reorganizing the National Security Staff. (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 9)

Bundy testified that he did not brief the President on the Executive Action project:

CHAIRMAN. And you have testified that you did not take the matter to the President?

BUNDY. As far as I can recall, Mr. Chairman. (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 16)

Bundy explained that the division of responsibility for national security affairs excluded Rostow from jurisdiction over covert operations, making it unlikely that Rostow would have been briefed on a project like ZR/RIFLE. (Bundy, 7/11/75, p. 11)

Rostow.—Rostow testified that he was “morally certain” that during his entire tenure in government, he never heard a reference to executive action or “such a capability for such an intention to act by the U.S.” (Rostow, 7/9/75, pp. 10, 13)¹

3. THE QUESTION OF AUTHORIZATION OR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXECUTIVE ACTION PROJECT BY THE DCI

Richard Bissell said he was “quite certain” that Allen Dulles had full knowledge of the Executive Action project for two reasons: first, it “would have come to the DCI’s attention” when Harvey was transferred between components of the Agency and assigned to work on Cuban operations;² and second, Bissell “would imagine” it was mentioned to Dulles at the initiation of the project. (Bissell, 7/22/75, p. 35) Bissell and Harvey briefed Richard Helms on Project ZR/RIFLE when he became DDP. (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 53; Harvey, 7/11/75, p. 63) But Bissell did not recall briefing John McCone about the project when McCone took over as DCI. (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 11) McCone testified that he had no knowledge of such a project. (McCone, 6/6/75, p. 43)

William Harvey said it was assumed that the project was within the parameters permitted by the DCI. But Harvey testified that officially advising the DCI of the existence of the project was “a bridge we did not cross” and would not have crossed until “there was either specific targeting or a specific operation or a specific recruitment.” (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 59)

4. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER PROJECT ZR/RIFLE WAS CONNECTED TO ANY ACTUAL ASSASSINATION PLOTS

The Committee has sought to determine whether the CIA development of an Executive Action capability was related in any way to the actual assassination efforts. One question raised by this inquiry is whether the participants in the assassination operations might have

¹ *Goodpaster and Gray.*—Andrew Goodpaster and Gordon Gray were the White House officials with responsibility for national security affairs during the latter part of the Eisenhower Administration. However, there was no evidence which raised the name of either man in connection with the development of an Executive Action capability. Goodpaster and Gray testified to having no knowledge of it. (Goodpaster, 7/17/75, p. 11; Gray, 7/9/75, p. 56)

² Harvey’s transfer to Cuban operations was not completed until late in 1961.

perceived the Executive Action capability as in some way lending legitimacy to the actual assassination efforts.

(a) *Conversation between Bissell and Bundy*

In his early testimony, Bissell said he did not have a recollection of whether he discussed the names of Castro, Lumumba, and Trujillo with anyone in the White House in the course of discussing the project to develop an executive action capability. However, Bissell testified that it was "perfectly plausible that I would have used examples." (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 51) He continued:

In such a discussion of a capability, I might well have used the three names that I just gave, because these were the sorts of individuals at that moment in history against whom such a capability might possibly have been employed. (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 51)

Bissell and Bundy both testified, however, that their discussion on the development of the capability for assassination did not involve any mention of actual assassination plans or attempts (see detailed treatment at Section (b), *supra*). There is no testimony to the contrary. The account of this conversation raises a question as to whether Bissell acted properly in withholding from Bundy the fact that assassination efforts against Castro had already been mounted and were moving forward. Bundy was responsible to a new President for national security affairs and Bissell was his principal source of information about covert operations at the CIA.

(b) *Bissell's instruction to Harvey to take over responsibility for underworld contact: November 1961*

Both Bissell and Harvey recall a meeting in November 1961, in which Harvey was instructed to take over the contact with John Rosselli as part of Project ZR/RIFLE. (Bissell, 6/11/75, pp. 19, 47; Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 86; and 6/11/75, p. 19) Harvey's notes placed the meeting on November 15, 1961, (I.G. Report, p. 39), during the period in which Harvey was freed from his duties on another Agency staff and assumed direction of Task Force W which ran CIA activity against the Castro regime.

According to Bissell and Harvey, their November meeting involved only the planning and research of a capability rather than a targeted operation against Castro. (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 13; Harvey, 7/11/75, p. 60) But Bissell acknowledged that the purpose of the Rosselli contact had been to assassinate Castro, and that "it is a fair inference that there would have been no reason to maintain it [the contact] unless there was some possibility of reactivating that operation." (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 19) Bissell stated that because the assassination plot against Castro involving the underworld figures

Had been stood down after the Bay of Pigs * * * and there was no authorization to pursue it actively * * * the responsibility that was given to him [Harvey] was that of taking over an inactive contact. (Bissell, 7/17/75, p. 14)

Bissell said that in effect he had asked Harvey to stand watch over the contact in case any action should be required and further testified

that it was never required. However, as noted above, the Rosselli operation was reactivated by Harvey in April 1962 after Bissell had left the Agency.

The Inspector General's Report stated: "After Harvey took over the Castro operation, he ran it as one aspect of ZR/RIFLE." (I.G. Report, p. 40) Harvey recalled that during a discussion with Bissell of the creation of an Executive Action capability, Bissell advised him of "a then going operation" involving the names of Maheu and possibly Rosselli and Giancana, "which was a part of the Agency's effort to develop * * * a capability for executive action." Harvey said that at the time of this discussion, the operation had been "in train" for "approximately two years or perhaps 18 months." (Harvey, 7/11/75, pp. 54, 55, 61)

Although his "net impression" was that both the "exploratory project" and the "specific operation" were "fully authorized and approved." Harvey said he could not testify that "specific White House authority for this given operation was implied or stated." (Harvey, 7/11/75, p. 54) Bissell does not recall telling anyone in the White House that something had been done to bring a CIA officer together with the criminal syndicate. (Bissell, 6/11/75, pp. 19-20) Harvey did not recall any mention of the White House or any authority higher than the DDP in his November 1961 meeting with Bissell. (Harvey, 7/11/75, pp. 60-61)

Although Richard Helms was briefed and given administrative responsibility (as DDP) for Project ZR/RIFLE three months later, he did not recall that ZR/RIFLE was ever considered as part of the plot to assassinate Castro. (Helms, 6/13/75, p. 55) Asked whether the actual assassination efforts against Castro were related to ZR/RIFLE (Executive Action), Helms testified: "In my mind those lines never crossed." (Helms, 6/13/75, p. 52)

Bissell's testimony, however, leaves more ambiguity: "the contact with the syndicate which had Castro as its target * * * folded into the ZR/RIFLE project * * * and they became one." (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 47) When asked whether the Executive Action capability "* * * for assassination" was "used against Castro." Bissell replied that it was "in the later phase." (Bissell, 6/11/75, p. 47) The instruction from Bissell to Harvey on November 15, 1961, however, preceded by approximately five months the reactivation of the CIA/underworld assassination operation against Castro.

(c) Use of QJ/WIN in Africa

QJ/WIN was a foreign citizen with a criminal background who had been recruited by the CIA for certain sensitive programs prior to Project ZR/RIFLE. As noted above, QJ/WIN's function during ZR/RIFLE was restricted to the "spotting" of potential assets for "multi-purpose" covert use. The Lumumba section of this report treats fully QJ/WIN's role.

Two factors may raise a question as to whether QJ/WIN was already being used in an *ad hoc* capacity to develop an assassination capability before ZR/RIFLE was formally initiated. First, there is a

similarity in the cast of characters: Harvey, QJ/WIN, the recruiting officer, and Scheider were connected with the Lumumba matter and reappear in connection with the subsequent development of ZR/RIFLE. Second, Bissell informed Harvey that the development of an assassination capability had already been discussed with the recruiting officer and Scheider before Harvey's assignment to ZR/RIFLE. (Harvey, 6/25/75, p. 52; I.G. Report, pp. 37-38)

Nevertheless, there does not appear to be any firm evidence connecting QJ/WIN and the plot to assassinate Lumumba. (see pp. 43 to 48), supra)