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The United States Senate

Report of Proceedings

Hearing held before

Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities

Friday, July 18, 1975

Washington, D.C.

(Stenotype Tape and Wastre turned over to the Committee for destruction)

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TOP SECRET
TESTIMONY OF
John S. D. Eisenhower

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17
EXECUTIVE SESSION

Friday, July 18, 1975

United States Senate,
Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations with Respect to
Intelligence Activities,
Washington, D. C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 12:05 p.m., in Room S. 407, the Capitol, Senator Frank Church (Chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Church (presiding), Huddleston, Tower and Schweiker.

Also present: Frederick A. O. Schwarz, Jr., Chief Counsel; Curtis R. Smothers, Minority Counsel; Charles Kirby, Elliott Maxwell, Michael Madigan, Frederick Baron, John Bayly, and Elizabeth Culbreth, Professional Staff Members.
The Chairman. The hearing will come back to order.

Mr. Eisenhower, would you please stand and take the oath?

Do you swear that all the testimony you will give in this proceeding will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Eisenhowe. I do.

TESTIMONY OF JOHN S. D. EISENHOWER

Mr. Schwarz. Mr. Eisenhower, I understand from your conversations that you want to make a statement, and as I told you, we always go through a procedural matter in the first place, which is, first would you just state your full name and address for the record.


Mr. Schwarz. And then the second thing is, as I told you, we always ask all our witnesses if they know that they have a right to counsel, and so forth.

Mr. Eisenhower. I am aware of that, sir.

Mr. Chairman, my opening statement or my whole statement is first of all to say how delighted I am and how complimented I am that you all allowed me to come here.

My motivation, of course, is that I understand that a lot of the testimony that is before this Committee is getting into matters of a somewhat conjectural nature, and perhaps
I could throw a little bit of light and make a consideration to it.

I am most appreciative to have the opportunity to come, as I know you all are busy.

I realize that in a situation like this the only problem that I am addressing, of course, is the possible Presidential involvement in any planning, say, the latter part of 1960, planning for the assassination of any individuals, not only thinking in terms of heads of states or governments, but any individual at all, Presidential involvement.

I realize that I would be somewhat of a suspect witness in a case like this, being the son of the President at that time. But I would just like to give a couple of facts that might have a bearing.

The facts are that to a very large extent throughout our adult years my father — is that the correct terminology? — confided in me to a very large degree. As an example, in July of 1945, the evening he returned from the Potsdam Conference to Frankfurt, he told me about a new bomb they had invented that might shorten the war but which might have some terrible consequences, namely, the atomic bomb, which was dropped sometime after that.

Of course, you realize that this was secret. Whether he was correct in telling me things like that or not I don't know. But it is factual.
You have seen Mr. Gordon Gray, you have seen General Goodpaster. And when you have me as a third of the trilogy, you will have all of the witnesses who were staff officers who had access to the President in the latter half of 1960 on national security affairs.

As such, I was told by my father of the U-2 in 1956. This is four years before it went down. From the time of reporting to the White House in 1958, as General Goodpaster's assistant I was shown the flight plans of the U-2 up until the time that the U-2 went down May 1 of 1960.

I say all this only to establish that the relationship between my father and I in confidences was very close, particularly during that period. And that is my first point.

And the second is pure and simple, that nothing -- and, of course, my exposure to the White House -- can be construed in my mind in the remotest way to mean any Presidential knowledge of or concurrence in any assassination plots or plans. I wouldn't say for one moment that there weren't plenty of plans being dreamed up in various agencies. I was a member of the Joint War Plans in the Army Staff, Army General Staff we made contingency plans for all sorts of things. Like the umpire said, they ain't nothing until I call them. And to the very best of my knowledge absolutely nothing came to the White House.

And I said in a letter to Senator Schweiker when I was
contemplating requesting this opportunity that I would trust
that I haven't gotten so blase over the years that something
like an assassination plan would have slipped my memory.

That is the end of my statement, sir.

The Chairman. Mr. Schwarz, do you have any questions?

Mr. Schwarz. Your opinion is that if your father had
been told about any CIA activity with respect to Mr. Castro,
and specifically with respect to Mr. Castro and the Mafia,
that he would have told you, and that your testimony is that
he did not tell you?

Mr. Eisenhower. My testimony is that he did not.

My conjecture, based on the other things he has told me, is
that in all likelihood he would have. But that is only
conjecture.

Mr. Schwarz. I think when we talked on the phone you
said something further in support of that conclusion, unless
I am mixing up something that General Goodpaster said, which
had to do with your father's attitude toward the control of
the Central Intelligence Agency after the U-2 incident.

Mr. Eisenhower. My guess is that you got that from
General Goodpaster. But General Paster and I -- after all,
I sat as far away from him as I am from you for two and a
half years, or 27 months, going in -- either he or I went
in to see the President when we were buzzed for on those
things. So, quite logically I think that General Goodpaster's
and my thinking might be very much the same. And, of course, after the U-2, when you have something like that, I think it is only natural that you keep a little bit of a jaundiced eye on the organization which has done this.

So we made a real point, never to let anyone, even the Secretary of State, get in to see the President unless one of us were there.

We were not according this privilege with Secretary John Foster Dulles.

Mr. Schwarz. In the earlier years?

Mr. Eisenhower. But those are earlier years than the years we are covering here.

When Secretary Herter took over in the spring of 1959, General Goodpaster and I tried an experiment. We tiptoed in behind the Secretary of State when he went into the Oval office and we got away with it. And from that time on we monitored everything.

I saw the document we talked about on the telephone, I saw the document that indicated 10 minutes where the President was alone with Allen Dulles on the 25th of November 1960. If I had not been made aware of that, or discovered it myself going through those same black books that you have, if I had not been aware of that, I would have testified to the best of my knowledge and belief that the President never saw Allen Dulles alone.
Mr. Schwarz. We also talked on the telephone about --
I told you the nature of the testimony. We have heard from
an officer of the Central Intelligence Agency who said that
he had no knowledge of such a meeting, but that he assumed
that Allen Dulles would have spoken to your father about the
Mafia activity, and that the nature of that conversation
would have been speaking in riddles or circumlocutious form.

And I believe we discussed your opinion as to whether
your father would tolerate a discussion which was circumlocutious. It is a confusing question, because your opinion
is that no such conversation occurred. But getting down to
testing the way in which the person who has testified described
it, and the elements he has put into it, can you cast any
light on that?

Mr. Eisenhower. Now, we are getting into an area of
conjecture in which my testimony would be suspect.
It is very much conjecture. And I would like to point out
that if I were in the position of anybody in this type of
operation, I would certainly have assumed, rightly or wrongly,
that I had some sort of authority from above before I went
ahead and did such a thing. I think it is only logical
that this gentleman who was testifying would assume that he
had some authority. That is a pretty big burden to take on
yourself. You say, look, it was my idea, and I just went ahead
and did it.
That is one part of the conjecture.

The other part of the conjecture having to do with my father's way of doing things, I think I could say with a certain amount of assurance that he was never cute, cute was one thing he was not. And being circumlocutious and saying one thing and winking at you was not his way of doing it. Something might get past him. But that is not the way you make decisions to mount assassination plots, and especially the details of it, no way.

Mr. Schwarz. Do you have an opinion from your knowledge of your father as to how he would react to any suggestion that the U.S. ought to employ the Mafia?

Mr. Eisenhower. Well, highly negative. I would say this, that his viceral reaction to the Mafia -- he didn't care for that kind of thing.

Now, if you have to do something -- I don't know whether that would stand in the way or not. I have in mind -- look at Darlan in November of 1941. There was nobody more despised in the Western World than Darlan was. But Dad had to deal with him for a short period of time in order to get the French to stop fighting in North Africa.

I don't think I could really contribute much to that question.

Mr. Schwarz. I just have one final question.

We have been wrestling with certain language in minutes.
And this is one minute of -- were you shown this minute?

Mr. Eisenhower. Yes, sir.

Mr. Schwarz. -- of a minute of a meeting on September
2, 1960 of the National Security Council. And you were
present in your capacity as Assistant White House Staff
Secretary, I think.

Mr. Eisenhower. That is listed here, yes.

Mr. Schwarz. Now, on the 15-page of the memo there is
a discussion of Mr. Lumumba in the Congo, in fact it starts
on the 14th page. And at the end of the first paragraph of
page 15 there is this language:

"Mobutu appeared to be the effective power in the
Congo for the moment, but Lumumba was not yet disposed of and
remained a grave danger as long as he was not disposed of".

I suppose you don't have any recollection of that meeting?

Mr. Eisenhower. No, I don't have a direct recollection.
I remember in general terms that the U.S. position was very
much anti-Lumumba, there is no question about it.

Mr. Schwarz. Focussing on those words, do you take
the words "disposed of" as intended to mean an assassination?

Mr. Eisenhower. No, I don't. And I wouldn't be too
surprised -- in other words, I have no quarrel with this
document. This document fits in pretty much with any recollec-
tion of the atmosphere.

Now, I would not be surprised if the words "disposed of"
are accurately reported, that those were the words that Mr. Dulles used, I would not be surprised by that. But unless it is some Freudian, I would not conjecture that the words "disposed of" meant an assassination, if for no other reason than that if I had something as nasty as this to plot, I wouldn't do it in front of 21 people -- I counted the number present before the meeting -- and I wouldn't have quite that broad an audience if I were talking about assassinating somebody.

The Chairman. Any questions, Mr. Smothers?

Mr. Smothers. Is it your testimony that between you and the General that all activities of the President were monitored, that you were monitoring both phone calls and visits and everything that went on in the Oval office?

Mr. Eisenhower. Essentially, yes. I think I so say -- unless you could find some little exception some place, anything having to do with national security, which would involve State, Defense, AEC, CIA primarily, USIA, anyone from any of those departments or agencies that went into the Oval office, either General Goodpaster or I went.

Mr. Smothers. Let me take it a step at a time.

First of all, if there was a phone call, did you monitor the phone call?

Mr. Eisenhower. No, sir. But Mrs. Whitman did sporadically. As a matter of policy, she monitored the phone calls. She
didn't catch them all, they might have been doing something else.

Mr. Smothers. That is what you mean by monitoring, she listened to the phone calls and gave you a memorandum or transcript?

Mr. Eisenhower. She didn't give the transcript to me, she made it for herself. And Mr. Kelley can give you more details on this than I can. He has been looking in Abilene. She would put in the files a day's phone calls -- Cliff Roberts called from Augusta National and he said this and that. And then this might be an official thing on that, which makes it difficult to clear the papers out of Abilene. I would not say that her records are complete, but they were as complete as she could take memoranda.

The Chairman. Did she do this pursuant to the President's instruction?

Mr. Eisenhower. Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, that is not an unusual habit, I don't think, in government.

Mr. Smothers. I wasn't suggesting that there was anything unusual about that or your going in to the President. But was it your feeling that no one talked to the President about national security until you were fully aware of the contents of that discussion?

Mr. Eisenhower. There would certainly be leaks in the system, no question about it. For example, after the President
got back to the second floor of the White House in the evenings, his telephone calls would not be monitored. So somebody could sneak in. If somebody was going to make a plan to assassinate somebody over the telephone at six o'clock in the evening, at the cocktail hour, my conjecture is that that is not very realistic.

Senator Huddleston. Maybe that is where this plan was hatched.

Mr. Smothers. I assumed that maybe you didn't go to the golf course -- or maybe you did?

Mr. Eisenhower. I was there most of the time, but not all. But Allen Dulles didn't go.

Mr. Smothers. Are we saying, then, that -- I am a little bit disturbed by the notion that if anybody did it it was Allen Dulles, and he must have come in at a time when the office wasn't covered I think as I understand your testimony the gist of it is that this is not the kind of thing that your father would have had agreed with, and to the best of your knowledge there was no opportunity at least for any extensive consideration of this kind of option.

Mr. Eisenhower. There could have been none, extensive --

Mr. Smothers. To eliminate all would, of course, require us to have some control of every possible contact, and I don't think you are doing that, are you?

Mr. Eisenhower. We had it pretty well plugged up, but
not perfectly, pretty well plugged up.

Mr. Smothers. I have nothing further, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman. Senator Tower?

Senator Tower. No.

The Chairman. Senator Huddleston?

Senator Huddleston. Just a couple of questions, Mr.

Eisenhower.

To your knowledge, did President Eisenhower ever call
the Director of the CIA and give them specific instructions
on any subject or any operation?

Mr. Eisenhower. You say do I recall it? No.

Senator Huddleston. You do not recall it?

Mr. Eisenhower. No, I do not.

Senator Huddleston. Or any other person in the CIA?

Mr. Eisenhower. He would have dealt only with Allen
Dulles or General Cabell. But the nature of the CIA operations
is such, or was such, that it is not the kind of thing
that the President dreams up and says, well, we will get the
CIA to do this. Maybe that is in conflict to some of the
things that have happened since then. But I have no recollection
of any time in which the President took an initiative of
asking the CIA to do anything.

Senator Huddleston. But you would say that it would be
inconsistent with perhaps, number one, President Eisenhower's
characterization the way he would operate, and inconsistent
with the operational procedure that prevailed at the White
House for him to directly call the CIA direct or any of the
Director's subordinates issuing any kind of an --

Mr. Eisenhower. That would be inconsistent with his
habits, yes. And also an operation of this size, or this
significance, I can't imagine that being done without consult-
ing with the Secretary of State, or somebody.

One thing, his philosophy, which I know quite well, was
that no man is indispensable, and so killing somebody off is
not going to change the situation that much?

For example, when we were on this 11 nation trip in
December of 1959, the Presidential aircraft had to go through
a little 80-mile corridor between the Soviet Union and Iraq.
And Iraq was extremely unfriendly at that time. And there
were some people saying, isn't it a little dangerous for you,
President, to be tightrope walking through this 80-mile
.corridor?

And he said, the silliest thing in the world they could
do is knock off the President of the U.S. He just laughed
at it. He didn't regard assassination as a feasible way of
doing business, because somebody else would step in, and
maybe the fellow who has been assassinated becomes a party.

Senator Huddleston. Prior to the U-2 incident did the
President ever express to you or General Goodpaster any
concern about activities of the CIA whether or not some of
the things they did had a high risk potential or might get
the country into trouble, or might get the Presidency into
trouble?

Mr. Eisenhower. No. To the best of my recollection, I
don't remember his saying anything like -- for one thing,
on the U-2, he may have said something like, this thing is not
going to go on forever -- he may have, I don't know.

He did have -- and I am sure that you have all the
reports of the Committee -- an intelligence monitoring committee,
or whatever you call it. I remember Mr. Leavitt was one of
the members of it. They were former public servants -- they
were sort of an advisory committee, and they met with the
Director of the CIA. And they had recommendations for the im-
provement of CIA procedures, namely, improvement in adminis-
tration, because an administration outfit like that really means
that A knows what B is doing, which did not seem to
be always the case.

And I remember very well that the Committee was critical
of the CIA operations, and the recommendations were completely
rejected by CIA --

Senator Huddleston. Does that preface what the state
of mind or attitude was?

Mr. Eisenhower. His attitude was that the CI could be
done better, but Mr. Dulles is so indispensable that we have
to do it that way. That has to do with the administration.
But the administration is part of the operation.

Senator Huddleston. So he relied heavily on Mr. Allen Dulles?

Mr. Eisenhower. Yes.

Senator Huddleston. And he had great confidence in him?

Mr. Eisenhower. Yes.

Senator Huddleston. Maybe until the U-2?

Mr. Eisenhower. Yes, I think the U-2 was injurious to that confidence.

The Chairman. Any questions, Senator Schweiker?

Senator Schweiker. Just one, Mr. Chairman.

John, after your father left the White House -- we have talked about now mainly your time and his time at the White House -- after your father left the White House, did he ever give intimation or indication to you or to any of your friends or associates about in retrospect any attempts against either Castro or Lumumba, ever discuss it in any way as far as assassination is concerned, now?

Mr. Eisenhower. Senator, I can't recall any of those foreign assassinations, I can't recall his ever commenting significantly on that.

Senator Schweiker. The other question is -- that was the general question about discussing it in any way -- he specifically never, after he left the White House, gave any indication to you or any of your associates that there was
any active participation by the White House or approval by
the White House of any kind of an operation?

Mr. Eisenhower. In his time, no, certainly. I was
just trying to figure if he had any opinions when Lumumba
finally was assassinated, or anything like that. But as far
as his own activity was concerned, absolutely not.

Now, there is one meeting where he and Lord Hume did
some joking, if I remember. I was there. But it was
all just a big laugh -- I hope somebody pushes this guy
off a bridge or something like that. And as I remember, Lord
Hume said, it so happens that we have lost the technique of
old-fashioned diplomacy. And I discount that. I was there.
That was during the meeting with the British Foreign Secretary.

To summarize, with all these caveats and so forth, my
testimony is still pretty simple, that I feel if anything
like that had been going on, I believe, based on the other
confidences that my father had given me, that I would have
known about it, and I could testify and he knew absolutely
nothing about anything.

The Chairman. Thank you very much.

(A memorandum was marked for
identification as Eisenhower
Exhibit No. 1.)
The Chairman. The Committee will reconvene at two o'clock for the completion of Mr. Goodwin's testimony.

(Whereupon, at 12:35 p.m., the Committee recessed, to reconvene at 2:00 p.m., the same day.)
MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Discussion at the 460th Meeting of the National Security Council, Wednesday, September 21, 1960.

Present at the 460th NSC Meeting were the President of the United States, presiding; the Acting Secretary of State (Dillon); the Secretary of Defense; and the Acting Director, Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization (Patterson). Also present at the Meeting and participating in the Council Actions below were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Attorney General (Items 1, 2 and 3); the Secretary of Commerce (Items 1, 2 and 3); the Acting Secretary of the Interior (Bennett) (Items 1 and 2); Mr. Tom Killefer for the President, Export-Import Bank of Washington (Items 1 and 2); and the Chairman, Council on Foreign Economic Policy (Item 3). Also attending the Meeting were the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Special Assistants to the President for National Security Affairs and for Security Operations Coordination; Assistant Secretary of Defense John N. Irwin; Mr. Robert Packard for the Department of State; Mr. Knight McPherson, Central Intelligence Agency; the White House Staff Secretary; the Assistant White House Staff Secretary; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the Meeting and the main points taken.

1. WESTERN EUROPEAN DEPENDENCE ON MIDDLE EAST PETROLEUM
   (NSC Action No. 2060; Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated March 26, 1959, and June 28, 1960; NSC 6011; Memos for NSC, same subject, dated August 9 and 29, and September 19, 1960)

   Mr. Gray introduced the subject to the Council. (A copy of Mr. Gray's Briefing Note is filed in the Minutes of the Meeting and another copy is attached to this Memorandum).

   At the conclusion of Mr. Gray's presentation, the President said he had received the most glowing reports on the prospects for petroleum production in Libya. He had been told that the Libyan reserves exceeded even the Sahara reserves. He asked
kept under continuing scrutiny by all interested departments and agencies to ensure that it serves the purposes of retarding the growth of the war potential of the Sino-Soviet Bloc and reducing its unity. Noted that, with respect to paragraph II of NSC 5704/3, U.S. export controls over such materials, equipment, technology and services as can be unilaterally controlled by the United States may be imposed not only to achieve a worthwhile adverse impact on the war potential of the European Soviet Bloc, but also to serve other U.S. policy objectives, especially with regard to technology and services.

NOTE: The action in b above, as approved by the President, subsequently transmitted to all holders of NSC 5704/3.

5. SIGNIFICANT WORLD DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING U.S. SECURITY

Mr. Dulles said he would first summarize developments in the Congo. Several African states were making frantic efforts to save Lumumba. Nasser is urging the UAR, Ghana, and Guinea to concentrate their forces in Leopoldville and bring pressure to bear for the maintenance of Lumumba as Prime Minister. Mr. Dulles remarked that the bulk of the UAR forces now in the Congo had been placed advisedly in north Equateur Province, while the Guinean forces were in the northern part of Leopoldville Province. Nasser had asked that a council be formed in Leopoldville consisting of the diplomatic representatives of the UAR, Ghana, and Guinea in that city. The UAR Ambassador to the Congo had been directed, in concert with the ambassadors of Ghana, Guinea, and Morocco, to attempt to persuade Kasavubu to effect a reconciliation with Lumumba. On September 20 Kasavubu had announced that he had reached an agreement with Lumumba but the latter had later displayed a piece of paper purporting to be an agreement with Kasavubu.

Secretary Dillon reported that Lumumba had requested a visa for travel to New York as the representative of the Congo to the UN and had also requested a visa as an official of the Government of the Congo. We had denied both requests for visas. However, if Lumumba asked for a visa to visit the U.S. as a private citizen, we would have difficulty in turning him down. Mr. Dillon added that the Congo Government declares it will arrest Lumumba if he attempts to leave the country.
Mr. Dulles said he believed a warrant had been issued for the arrest of Lumumba. Aside from Lumumba, Mobutu appears to be the only man in the Congo able to act with firmness. A recent attempt to assassinate Mobutu had failed.

development has been Mobutu's creation of a council of advisers, most of whom are graduate students. The old ministers have been turned out of office and their offices have been taken over for the council, which is intended to carry on for a temporary period. Mr. Dulles reported that the USSR had suffered a severe blow to its prestige in the Congo. However, he had been surprised at the ease with which the Soviets were forced out of the Congo. He believed that the Soviet diplomats, after departing from the Congo, went to Acrem but he did not know whether they had moved on toward the USSR. Mr. Gray asked whether the Soviets were really quitting the Congo. Secretary Dillon said the Soviet press has not yet admitted that the Soviets have quit the Congo. Mr. Dulles said the Soviet diplomats indicated to the press before leaving that they would be back. Secretary Dillon believed it was clear that the Soviets had not given up in the Congo. Mr. Dulles reported that the Soviet diplomats left the Congo so hurriedly that the Soviet markings which they painted over the Congo markings on their planes were still wet when they left. Mr. Dulles said the Soviet ships off the African coast were apparently awaiting a clarification of the situation. Mobutu appeared to be the effective power in the Congo for the moment but Lumumba was not yet disposed of and remained a grave danger as long as he was not disposed of.

Mr. Dulles observed that the situation in Laos was still confusing and that little progress had been made toward the settlement of the crisis during the past week. The threatening situation in San Neun Province, however, had been quieted as a result of the dispatch of Laotian parachute troops to that area. The situation remains troublesome because Pathet Lao and Viet Minh forces could intervene at any time. The problem of the conflicting governments in Laos is no nearer a settlement. The King has requested that General Ouane and General Phoumi call upon him. A skirmish between Phoumi's forces and Vietchinese forces has been reported at Pak Cane, but little bloodshed resulted. Apparently, Phoumi has adopted tactics of harassing on a war of nerves against Vietchinese. There has been firing across the MeKong River into the city and Phoumi apparently intends to starve out the government. Meanwhile,