

Memorandum

TO: Jeremy Gunn
FROM: Eric Scheinkopf
RE: Church Committee documents - Box 36, Folder 4 of Helms testimony on 9/12/75
FILE NO: 4.0.2 Helms

The testimony began with a review of 1950's CIA actions such as those in Iran and Guatemala (page 10-11) and Helms was saying that these successes led the CIA's leadership to think it might be successful in the Bay of Pigs.

On pages 20-22 the issue of what would be raised in formal staff meetings and how Allen Dulles would deal with issues was addressed. Church Committee Staff Director William Miller notes that Richard Bissell, when he testified before the Church Committee, said Dulles had a habit of, after a formal staff meeting, then meeting with a handful of people two or three times weekly and that he (Miller) believes those people Bissell mentioned as meeting with Dulles were Bissell, Helms and Wisner. Miller, in the course of his exchange with Helms, mentioned that many things were done formally or on the record, but that a lot of things were done informally or not on the record. Miller recounts, in his exchange with Helms, that Dulles' means of operating "was to keep a lot of things in his vest pocket, his discussions with the White House, with Foster Dulles, or directly with the President."

Helms said it was regarded as "bad form to raise operational matters in the staff meetings" as there were people in the staff meetings from CIA's administrative side and the DDI "who were not supposed to know about these things." He went on to say "it is more accurate to say that these rump meetings after the staff meetings to discuss operational details and policies which were forbidden to be discussed in a regular staff meeting." Helms acknowledged that it was in these meetings where the most sensitive and compartmented things were discussed. When a staffer asked about record maintenance by saying in the form of a question "No records were kept at these meetings?" Helms replied "Certainly, they were the most informal." When the Staff Director said "And a lot of things that went on exist nowhere on paper," Helms replied "Never will."

On page 41 the role of the Under Secretary of State and that person's relationship with the Agency was discussed. Staff Director Miller mentioned that Douglas Dillon, when he held this position, handled the mutual security program and was also involved in liaison with the CIA. Helms said that the Under Secretary always had an "important place in this policy making role with the Agency." He said in later years it was "bumped down" to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs who he said was usually a professional and understood these things "a little better."

In addition (page 43), Helms briefly talked about the policy making structure in the Kennedy Administration and that almost any Special Assistant in the White House felt "he had a right to call up anybody in the government on his own business."