

Staff D - and the “Magic Button”

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Staff D and NSA Support

- Staff D (within the CIA Operations Directorate) was tasked with obtaining codes, ciphers and equipment used in the encrypted communications of foreign nations.
- The material obtained by Staff D was used by the NSA in communications monitoring and intercepts of military, diplomatic and commercial transmissions.
- NSA used the Air Force for electronic intercepts and signals intelligence collection of radio and telegraph communications.
- NSA used the Navy for electronic interception of Soviet military and commercial cable traffic via submarine cable “taps”.
- CIA foreign station staff developed regular phone line and phone cable taps – sharing the collections with NSA – as in Mexico City.

Staff D Domestic Activities

- Extreme efforts were taken to ensure CIA deniability in Staff D jobs.
- Targeted materials and equipment were obtained through burglaries, safe cracking and thefts from both couriers and secured facilities.
- Domestic Staff D contract employees included locksmiths, safecrackers and kidnapers – but not professional killers or assassins.
- Some assets also worked for underworld figures and gangsters.
- CIA Office of Security worked with the FBI to advise them of travel for projects using Staff D assets - so as to separate CIA activities from actual crimes.

CIA Exposure in Foreign Collections

- In 1959 the CIA sent a technical services team to Cuba at the request of its Far Eastern Division – to place taps and collect materials from the Chinese diplomatic mission to Havana.
- That team was led by the head of the CIA electronics collection staff - David Christ – who along with his team ended up in a Cuban prison.
- The CIA first turned to Cuban criminals to break the team out of prison and later managed to obtain their release after the Bay of Pigs fiasco.
- The Cubans never fully realized the value of the team, in particular of Christ himself.

William Harvey and Staff D

- William Harvey served as head of Staff D and Staff E circa 1949
- Staff E proceeded the NSA – possibly designated for CIA electronic intelligence collections
- The Berlin tap of a major Soviet cable was conducted while Harvey was CIA Chief of Station in Berlin.
- Harvey was again put in charge of Staff D circa 1959 – following reassignment as CIA Station Chief in Berlin.

Staff D Foreign Operations

- Harvey became involved with extending Staff D efforts overseas, initially in Europe. The Technical Services fiasco in Cuba suggested the need for extreme deniability in foreign operations.
- Harvey's first task was identifying and then recruiting foreign criminal assets capable of operating in Europe.
- Harvey solicited leads for contacts and potential candidates from the CIA Office of Security.
- Staff D leads for potential recruits included safecrackers in Italy, forgers in France and a referral candidate in Antwerp, Belgium.

QJ /WIN

- QJ/WIN (Jose Marie Mankel) was the Belgian station asset solicited for Staff D prospect referrals.
- Mankel had been a CIA asset since 1958 – working under supervision of the CIA Station Chief in Luxemburg.
- Mankel QJ/WIN (a Belgian) was made available to Richard Helms for an operation against Patrice Lumumba in the Belgian Congo.
- QJ/WIN's annual salary and expenses are listed at \$7,200, all other Staff D expenses for Europe totaled only \$14, 700.

Cuban Intelligence Activities

- Prior to the Bay of Pigs David Morales was in place at JM/WAVE in the first Cuba project – training special Cuban exile groups in intelligence and counter intelligence.
- Morale's exile groups were intended to be the new Cuban intelligence service following the overthrow of Fidel Castro.
- After the Bay of Pigs, members of those groups were recruited into a new Cuban unit operating out of JM/WAVE - James Angleton/CI was tasked with helping organize a highly effective exile intelligence service supported by qualified CIA officers.
- Angleton was also tasked with a new assessment of Cuban intelligence capabilities. His report was submitted to the Special Group in the fall of 1961.
- In Summer 1961, Harvey assigned to the second new anti-Castro project (Mongoose) ad head of CIA support – designated as Task Force W and supported at JM/WAVE by Operations Chief David Morales.

The Magic Button

- September/October 1961, Richard Helms directed Harvey to activate a new CIA Executive Action project.
- Harvey's personal notes describe his being assigned to take over "ongoing" assassination activities against Fidel Castro – which had begun in the fall of 1960 with John Roselli.
- Harvey's personal notes on the Magic Button include his advice to himself to consult with James Angleton on the assignment.
- Harvey appears extremely sensitive about the assignment from Helms – takes his own personal notes into his home files.

Harvey's Notes

- “Never mention word ‘assassination’”
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- “no projects on paper”
- “strictly person-to-person, singleton ops.”
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- “planning should include provisions for blaming Sovs or Czechs in case of blow.”
- “QJ/WIN is under written contract as a principal agent, with the primary task of spotting agent candidates.”

Harvey's Notes

- “Should have phony 201 in RG [Central Registry] to backstop this, all documents therein forged and backdated.”
- “Should look like a CE [counterespionage / counterintelligence] file”
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- [Executive action would] “require most professional, proven operationally competent, ruthless, stable, CE-experienced ops officers.”
- “[talk to] Jim A [James Angleton]”

ZR/RIFLE

- During October, 1961 - in two separate meetings - Harvey and Angleton approach a British intelligence officer about assassinations.
- Angleton takes action to cover Harvey's assassination project with his own intelligence contacts inside Cuba.
- A ZR/RIFLE crypt is generated in February 1962 - outside regular agency crypt authorizations
- Harvey's obfuscation hides the new executive action program under an authorization for the employment of assets under his Staff D responsibilities – QJ/WIN is used as the employment cover.

ZR/RIFLE and John Roselli

- Helms endorsed the ZR/RIFLE crypt – deniably approving the assignation project - his memo is designated as eyes only.
- In April 1962 Harvey met with Roselli and reactivated the Castro assassination project under ZR/RIFLE – its first new attempt, by poison, followed within weeks.
- The only known executive action target for ZR/RIFLE was Fidel Castro and the only known asset was John Roselli.
- The assassination project is supported by the JM/WAVE station – with support by station operations chief David Morales.

ZR/RIFLE in 1963

- Following the end of Mongoose and Task Force W - in late 1962 - Harvey retained his Staff D duties during 1963.
- Harvey remained operational as related to Staff D activities through much of 1963, until his relocation to Italy.
- ZR/RIFLE was funded by Helms for 1963.
- In May 1963 Harvey traveled to Miami – the trip was officially recorded as a meeting to close down ZR/Rifle.
- Miami meetings include Harvey and two others – Roselli and possibly Morales