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U.S. PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON CIA ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES FILES, [1947-74] 1975

Collection Type

Federal Records

Extent

41 cubic feet (ca. 82,000 pp.)

Record Type

Textual

Access

Materials related to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy or to anti-Castro activities, 1960-64, have been processed for research. A significant portion of this material is security classified and accessible only through researcher-initiated declassification review. The bulk of the Commission files are unprocessed.

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Processed by

Karen Holzhausen, May 31, 1992

Scope and Content Note

President Gerald R. Ford created the Commission on CIA Activities within the United States on January 4, 1975. He directed the Commission to determine whether or not any domestic CIA activities exceeded the Agency's statutory authority and to make appropriate recommendations. He appointed Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller chairman of the Commission. (The Commission is often referred to as the "Rockefeller Commission.") Other members were John T. Connor, C. Douglas Dillon, Erwin N. Griswold, Lane Kirkland, Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Ronald Reagan, and Edgar F. Shannon, Jr. David W. Belin, a former staff member of the Warren Commission, was named Executive Director. Named Senior Counsel were Harold A. Baker, Ernest Gellhorn, Robert B. Olsen, and William W. Schwarzer. Counsel were Marvin L. Gray, Jr.; George A. Manfredi; James N. Roethe; and James B. Weidner. Ronald J. Greene served as Special Counsel. Staff members were R. Mason Cargill, Peter R. Clapper, and Timothy S. Hardy.

The Commission looked into all aspects of CIA operations within the United States. Its report, submitted to the President in June 1975, lists the following significant areas of investigation: mail intercepts; Intelligence Community coordination; "Operation CHAOS" (collecting information on dissidents); protection of the Agency against threats of violence; other investigations by the Office of Security; involvement of the CIA in improper activities for the White House (including Watergate); domestic activities of the Directorate of Operations; domestic activities of the Directorate of Science and Technology; CIA relationships with other federal, state, and local agencies; indices and files on American citizens; and allegations concerning the assassination of President Kennedy. The Commission also looked into the legal authority of the CIA and its internal and external controls.

One area on which the Commission collected evidence, but did not include in its report, was the role of the CIA in assassination plots against foreign leaders. The study focused on plots against Fidel Castro of Cuba and Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic among others. The Commission was primarily interested in seeing if these plots involved any domestic illegal activities, such as connections with organized crime, as had been alleged. The report states that the Commission did not have time to complete the study, so it was turning the materials over to the White House.

The processed segment of this collection consists of materials identified as being related to either the John Kennedy assassination or to plots against Castro. The anti-Castro materials are included because of allegations that Castro or his supporters were part of a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy as retribution.

The Investigation of the Kennedy Assassination

The Commission investigated allegations that the CIA was somehow involved in the assassination of President Kennedy. Specifically, it looked into allegations that E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis were CIA agents and were present in Dallas ("the derelicts") at the time of the assassination and could have fired the alleged shots from the grassy knoll. It also investigated claims that the CIA had relationships with Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby.

The Commission heard testimony, taped interviews, took depositions, consulted experts in forensic pathology and ballistics, examined photographic evidence, and

requested documents from various intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The Commission concluded that the findings of the Warren Commission regarding a lone assassin were correct and that Hunt and Sturgis were not the derelicts. No concrete evidence was presented to link Oswald or Ruby to the CIA; the Commission concluded that the allegations were "farfetched speculation."

Description of Processed Files

These files contain two distinct types of material. I will refer to the first type as Kennedy assassination materials and the second type as anti-Castro materials, although both types were selected because of their possible connection to the Kennedy assassination.

Kennedy Assassination Materials

Most relate to the allegation that CIA operatives (possibly in the persons of E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis) fired shots from the "grassy knoll" in Dealey Plaza at the time of the Kennedy shooting. Also considered was the allegation that Oswald and/or Jack Ruby had connections with the CIA. Witnesses, many of whom were unsolicited, provided testimony and exhibits supporting or refuting those allegations. The findings of the Warren Commission regarding Oswald as a lone assassin and the single-bullet theory were considered through analysis of photographs and the Zapruder film, examination of Kennedy autopsy materials by a panel of medical consultants, sworn testimony, and examination of documents from the CIA and other agencies. A copy of the Zapruder film, lent by Robert Groden, is in the collection. There are also drafts of Chapter 19 of the Commission report, which deals with this aspect of the investigation.

Anti-Castro Materials

They consist primarily of copies of "historical" documents provided to the Commission by the CIA, predominantly, and the State Department, Defense Intelligence Agency, and Justice Department. The documents deal mainly with planning for covert operations in Cuba, 1960-64, including assassination attempts on Fidel Castro. The Cuba documents include some items on the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis, but by far the bulk of the material relates to Operation MONGOOSE. Included are minutes of meetings of the various special groups assigned to planning anti-Castro operations, reports on the operations, and memoranda between the individuals involved.

Also included in the "Assassination Materials" processed are transcripts of sworn testimony and interviews conducted by Rockefeller Commission staff with former CIA, State Department, and Defense Department officials from the 1960s regarding what they knew about plans to assassinate foreign leaders and about the connection between the Cuba operations and organized crime.

Related Materials (June 1992)

The Congressional Files of Gerald R. Ford contain materials related to his service on the Warren Commission (17 cubic feet). The Records of the U.S. Department of the Army, Military District of Washington, Directorate of Ceremonies and Special Events contain approximately two cubic feet of records on the transport of President Kennedy's remains, his funeral ceremony and interment, and administration of the gravesite. These materials are open for research.

The Presidential Handwriting File and the files of Presidential counsel Philip Buchen contain materials on the intelligence investigations of the mid-1970s, including the Rockefeller Commission. These collections are open for research. The Ford Presidential Papers may contain additional materials related generally to the Rockefeller Commission or congressional investigations of the intelligence community. Use the PRESNET database to locate them.

The neighboring Bentley Historical Library holds papers of John Stiles relating to his collaboration with Gerald Ford on Portrait of the Assassin, a book about Lee Harvey Oswald which grew out of Ford's work on the Warren Commission.

Additional materials on the Rockefeller Commission or plots against Fidel Castro are in unprocessed collections or unprocessed series of open collections.

These include about 3,000 pages of collected historical documents, which continue to be heavily classified, gathered by the White House on anti-Castro activities.

[NOTE: For additional information regarding the acquisition and processing of the Kennedy and anti-Castro files from this collection, please see MEMO FOR THE FILE, dated June 8, 1992, which is appended to this finding aid.]

Last Modified Date

2025-03-07

Box 1 - Belin-Gray-Greene Files

Status	Title
OPEN	B-G-G (II-AA), Memoranda to Legal Staff
OPEN	B-G-G (IV-K), Background Material on Oswald and Warren Commission
OPEN	B-G-G (IV-T), Withholding of Evidence from the Warren Commission
OPEN	Baker-Weidner Files
OPEN	B-W (II-B), Mr. Hunt's File - Mr. Clapper

Box 1 (Continued) - Olsen-Roethe Files

Status	Title
OPEN	O-R (I-X), Gregory, Schoenman, Groden & Jaffe
OPEN	O-R (I-AA), Hunt, E. Howard - Interviewed 3/4/75
OPEN	O-R (I-OO), Sturgis, Frank
OPEN	O-R (I-XX), Chapman, E. Forrest
OPEN	O-R (III-A), Staff Interview Transcript - March 26, 1975 (1)-(7)

Box 2 - Olsen-Roethe Files

Status	Title
OPEN	O-R (III-A), Extra Copies of All Gregory Related Exhibits (8)
OPEN	O-R (III-A), Ralph Schoenman, Re Robert Kennedy Assassination (9)
OPEN	O-R (III-B), Staff Interview Transcript - Marchetti, April 3, 1975
OPEN	O-R (III-C), Frank Sturgis Testimony Transcript, April 3, 1975 (1)-(2)
OPEN	O-R (III-D), Frank Sturgis Testimony and Tapes, 4-4-75
OPEN	O-R (III-E), John K. Lattimer Testimony Transcript, May 7, 1975 (1)
OPEN	O-R (III-E), John K. Lattimer Exhibits, 1975
OPEN	O-R (III-F), Staff Interview Transcript - Wecht, May 7, 1975 (1)-(2)
OPEN	O-R (III-F), Cyril H. Wecht - Exhibits (3)

Box 3 - Olsen-Roethe Files

Status	Title
OPEN / DIGITIZED	O-R (III-G), Staff Interview Transcript - April 18, 1975
OPEN	O-R (IV-E), Roethe Letter Request of May 23, 1975 - Item 3: Suicide Involving Ingestion of LSD
OPEN / DIGITIZED	O-R (IV-FF), Project MOCKINGBIRD - Telephone Tap of Newspaper Columnists
OPEN	O-R (IV-GG), Project MUDHEN - Surveillance of Syndicated News Columnist
OPEN	O-R (IV-HH), Project CELOTEX I - Surveillance of Washington Post Reporter
OPEN	O-R (V-A), FBI Lab Reports - Hunt & Sturgis Photos
OPEN	O-R (V-B), Kennedy Assassination - Miscellaneous Notes
OPEN	O-R (V-C), Kennedy Assassination - Panel of Medical Consultants (1)-(2)
OPEN	O-R (V-D), FBI Material re Kennedy Assassination
OPEN	O-R (V-E), NPIC Analysis of Zapruder Filming of John F. Kennedy Assassination
OPEN	O-R (V-F), Kennedy Assassination - Paul Hoch Letter re Warren Commission, (Also see "Requests for Info - CIA"), (1)-(3)
OPEN	O-R (V-G), Kennedy Assassination - Medical and Scientific Articles (1)-(3)

Box 4 - Olsen-Roethe Files

Status	Title
OPEN	O-R (V-H), Kennedy Assassination - General Correspondence
OPEN	O-R (V-I), Requests for Information - FBI, Justice
OPEN	O-R (V-J), Selected Documents Relating to Allegations Concerning the Assassination of President Kennedy (1)-(2)
OPEN	O-R (V-K), Lattimer, John
OPEN	O-R (V-L), Wecht, Cyril H.
OPEN	O-R (VI-C), Requests for Information - CIA

Status	Title
OPEN	Zapruder Film loaned to Commission by Robert Groden on 3/27/75

Box 4 (Continued) - Assassination Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Assassination Materials, "Misc. Materials (3)"
OPEN	Assassination Materials - "Interviews (3)"
OPEN	Assassination Materials, "CIA Correspondence (3)"

Box 5 - Assassination Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Assassination Materials, "Correspondence (2)"
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Deposition of a CIA Employee
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Deposition of Edw. G. Lansdale
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Deposition of Edw. G. Lansdale (portion)
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Review of Dulles Crono (sic) re Kennedy Assassination
OPEN	Assassination Materials, "Sturgis (2)"
OPEN	Assassination Materials, "What Could Castro Have Known?"
OPEN	Assassination Materials, CIA Connections with Organized Crime
OPEN	Assassination Materials, CIA Relationship with Robert A. Maheu
OPEN	Assassination Materials, "Affidavits (2)"
OPEN	Assassination Materials, "Chron-Assassinations (2)"
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Request of 8 Apr 75 - Mongoose
OPEN	Assassination Materials, L. Fletcher Pourty
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Miscellaneous Rockefeller Commission and CIA Files (1)-(4)

Box 6 - Assassination Files

Status	Title
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Miscellaneous Rockefeller Commission and CIA Files (5)-(12)

Status	Title
OPEN	Assassination Materials, Project (Name Classified)
OPEN	Chapter Drafts
OPEN	Chapter 19 Drafts (1)-(2)
OPEN	Index of Testimony Transcripts
OPEN	January 27, 1975 - Colby, William
OPEN	January 27, 1975 - Ober, Richard
OPEN	February 3, 1975 - Kirkpatrick, Lyman
OPEN	February 3, 1975 - Ober, Richard
OPEN	April 21, 1975 - Rusk, Dean