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MEETING REPORT



Document's Author: Tim Wray/ARRB

Date Created: 01/30/96

Meeting Logistics

Date:	01/29/96
Agency Name:	Department of Defense
Attendees:	Dr. Alfred Goldberg, Tim Wray
Topic:	ARRB; Warren Commission

File this
w/ FBI
w/ counter attack
in
Commission

Summary of the Meeting

Met with Dr. Alfred Goldberg in his office for approximately one hour. Dr. Goldberg is currently the Historian for the Office of the Secretary of Defense; in 1963-4 he was on the staff of the Warren Commission. (He acknowledged that he wrote some of the Commission report and played a major role in editing the rest.) He was already familiar with the Review Board and the JFK Act, and mentioned at the outset that he knew Anna Nelson. He seems a strong supporter of the Review Board and its goals.

Major points made by Dr. Goldberg:

Not
used

DOD was extremely helpful to the Warren Commission, providing much of its support staff and technical assistance with special requirements. When the Commission requested radio and TV tapes from media sources in Dallas, more than 1700 pounds of materials were assembled. These were brought to Washington, DC aboard a USAF aircraft and played for the Commission staff by Army Signal Corps technicians. Dr. Goldberg personally reviewed more than nine hours of these tapes, which were very helpful in corroborating testimony. (He said Jack Ruby's presence at Dallas DA's press conference was confirmed by reviewing TV tapes.)

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara had little contact with the Warren Commission. McNamara assigned NIEDERLANDER from General Counsel's office to be DOD liaison.

Ken

NSA contributed a great deal of background information to the Commission and was a very important source of information. ("They had a lot of intercepts. Telephone calls by Castro, Russians, Barry Goldwater, et cetera. They know a helluva lot.") Goldberg said that Earl Warren's February 1964 statement suggesting that some of the Commission's findings would not immediately be made public ["... it might not be in your lifetime"] referred "precisely" to NSA intercepts.

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The FBI "didn't let us in thanks to 'J. Edgar.'" At one time we considered demanding direct access to FBI files rather than just requesting information from the Bureau. We -- the staff and the General Counsel -- discussed this, but we decided that if the FBI didn't want us to see something they would just remove it from the files. There was bad feeling on Hoover's part toward Warren." Consequently, the Commission "didn't get everything." The FBI seemed "very defensive." The Secret Service was also very defensive, though they "fell over backward" to

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cooperate with the Commission.

Goldberg suggested that some other surviving members of the Warren Commission staff, specifically SLAWSON and COLEMAN, may recall more about the international and military issues than he does.

The only reports the Warren Commission got concerning anti-Castro Cubans came from the FBI -- nothing from DOD or CIA. Some of these are included in the documents volumes of the Commission Report. When documents were received from the FBI, some included full names, addresses, and telephone numbers of anti-Castro Cubans still living in Cuba. (Goldberg said that when Life magazine published Lee Harvey Oswald's diary, it contained entries naming a Jewish family in Minsk with which he was friendly and quoted them making anti-Soviet jokes or remarks. "We later learned," he said, "that this family was arrested and sent to the Gulag.") Goldberg doublechecked with the FBI liaison on the Cuba documents, but they "took a pass" and said they saw no reason not to release the documents as is. Goldberg then ran them by the CIA, which was "horrified" and asked him to "do something." Goldberg personally excised names, addresses, etc. from Cuba documents before including them in Report documents.

Concerning the Commission's work in general, Goldberg said it operated under tremendous pressure and "everything was done in a great hurry. The staff felt it could have profited with a few more months. It could have nailed down issues, corrected mistakes, and fixed some misperceptions that have since spawned various conspiracy theories." However, the Commission members were all busy men with other pressing jobs or duties. Warren came to Commission meetings in the morning but then had to go run the Supreme Court in the afternoon. Richard Russell attended few meetings, sending a female staffer (taken from his brother's office in Atlanta) to represent him most of the time. McCloy was practicing law in New York and likewise often sent a stand-in. Dulles was about the only one with plenty of time.

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Members -
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Keep
Dulles
Dulles

The only issue about which there was serious disagreement within the Commission was the single bullet. Richard Russell found it very difficult to accept this. John Connally also never accepted this, though "I think often the victim is the least likely witness."

With respect to Oswald-as-lone-assassin, Goldberg says there is "no concrete evidence to prove anything else. As for a conspiracy, you can't prove a negative," but again -- no concrete evidence.

Goldberg mentioned that Max Holland is writing a history of the Warren Commission, and spoke highly of him as someone who has gotten the cooperation of most of the surviving Commission members and staffers.

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Color -
FBI & WC
relations
"Counterstrike"
on WC*

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*McNamara
Niederlander*

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