

File: CO-2-34,030

April 22, 1964

Mr. J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy
200 Maryland Avenue, N. E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Attached are our answers to the series of questions,
forwarded to us by the Commission, dealing with Secret
Service protective activities subsequent to the Dallas
trip.

Sincerely,

James J. Rowley

Attachment

cc: Robert Carswell
Special Assistant to the Secretary

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Question No. 1:

Does the Secret Service draw on other Treasury law enforcement activities for personnel and other assistance in protecting the President?

Answer:

The Secret Service is now experimenting with the use of other Treasury law enforcement agents on building and route surveys over areas frequently travelled by a President. Prior to Dallas other Treasury law enforcement agencies were used infrequently since these agencies receive no appropriations for such work, and the administrative problems involved in removing them from their regularly assigned work to that of Presidential protection are detrimental to fulfilling their own responsibilities. The Secret Service has traditionally taken the position, that since authority to protect the President was given by Congress to the Secret Service, it should not ask other enforcement agencies to assign personnel to this task. However, some of the new techniques with which the Secret Service is now experimenting require the use of large numbers of personnel for relatively short periods. We may, therefore, wish to change the present procedures in this area, but a final decision must await an evaluation of the new techniques now being tested.

Question No. 2:

Could the Secret Service be assisted in its Presidential protection operations by other Federal law enforcement agencies when the President is visiting cities in which they have agents? For example, it has been suggested that agents of all the Treasury Department enforcement units should be given a basic course in Presidential protection and assigned temporarily to this work when the President visits a city within their territory.

Answer:

The Secret Service can envision occasions when the assistance of other Federal law enforcement agencies to the Secret Service in its protection operations would be beneficial. For instance, during campaign trips an incumbent President travels widely and swiftly and may visit cities and towns where police facilities are limited and sufficient Secret Service personnel cannot be made available. In those situations we could make limited use of other Federal law enforcement agents to augment the Secret Service, but we would prefer to have Secret Service personnel available for these assignments.

There appears to be a misconception that an appropriation for additional Secret Service personnel would not be justified since they would not be engaged full time on Presidential protection activities; and, further, that the other Treasury agencies can spare the manpower for such protective assignments when needed. The Secret Service, too, has field installations which would, if additional personnel were made available, be able to conduct more effectively the investigation of counterfeiting and other crimes over which it has jurisdiction. We believe that the additional manpower required for protective surveys and assignments should be secured at least in the first instance from our own trained and experienced field forces rather than from the field forces of other Treasury enforcement or other Federal law enforcement agencies which are already hard pressed.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has received small appropriations for Presidential protection, and in addition to providing information and supplying a liaison officer, they have supplied agents, at the request of the Secret Service, in connection with a number of Presidential trips since November 22, 1963. We are working with the FBI to arrive at a practical relationship involving appropriate use of their personnel.

The suggestion that agents of the Treasury Department be given a basic course in Presidential protection is in large measure accomplished by our present procedure. In the basic Treasury Department Enforcement School an orientation course on Secret Service activities is provided in addition to lectures concerning the treatment of mentally deranged people and the handling of bombs. This gives each Treasury law enforcement agent basic information concerning the problems of protection, many of which are similar to other problems encountered by enforcement agencies.

Question No. 3:

Is too great a risk represented by having both the President and Vice President participate in a public function, such as the Dallas motorcade?

Answer:

The participation by both the President and the Vice President at any single public function obviously increases the risk of an assassination attempt because it may be assumed that at least certain categories of potential assassins would want to eliminate both the President and Vice President, thereby doing greater damage to our country. The Secret Service has no basis on which to evaluate the seriousness of this added risk, and obviously such added risk must be weighed against

the political considerations which might lead the President and the Vice President to desire to appear together. Accordingly, we do not feel that it would be proper for us to express an opinion as to whether such a joint appearance is "too great a risk."

Question No. 4:

Describe what steps, if any, the Secret Service has taken since November 22, 1963, or which it intends to take, to revise its procedures in the following areas:

- (a) Liaison with other Federal, State and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies.
- (b) The activities of the Protective Research Section in identifying and maintaining timely information concerning individuals who are risks or potential risks to the life of the President.
- (c) Activities of the Protective Research Section in the development of devices for protecting the President.
- (d) Checks or inspections of buildings that are possible hazards along the route of the motorcade or other activities to add to protection.

Answers

After the assassination of President Kennedy, the Secret Service initiated a broad review of its procedures in the field of Presidential protection. This review was put on a formal basis in response to a memorandum of Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, dated December 20, 1963, a copy of which was supplied to the Commission on February 4, 1964, by the Secretary of the Treasury. In the four months during which this study of procedures has been in progress, a number of changes have been instituted; additional changes are expected.

(a) and (b). The fact that the name of Lee H. Oswald was not furnished to the Protective Research Section prior to the time of the assassination made it clear that PRS criteria required re-examination. In particular, we have been re-examining the liaison procedures of the Secret Service with other law enforcement and intelligence agencies and the criteria employed by the Secret Service in identifying individuals who might be dangerous to the President. These two areas -- liaison with other agencies and identification of high risk individuals -- are closely connected because effective liaison and exchange of information

is impractical unless we can identify -- and all of our intelligence agencies can agree on -- the types of individuals who constitute a risk to the President.

The Secret Service has been working with a panel set up in cooperation with the Scientific Advisor to the President and with the Rand Corporation to develop acceptable criteria. Whatever criteria are eventually adopted, we face a very difficult problem of keeping the numbers small enough so that effective protective action is possible. If the names in the PRS files were expanded to include the 3,000,000 or more individuals in the United States who are mentally ill and/or who are members of subversive groups, they would swamp the combined capabilities of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies, no matter how effective our liaison system. On the other hand, if the criteria are so restrictive that a future Lee H. Oswald were excluded, the utility of the files would be questionable. Our studies and those of the groups who are working with us are designed to produce an effective judgment as to where the proper line should be drawn.

Since the assassination, the Secret Service has received considerably more material from other Government agencies than theretofore. Additional contacts have been set up in Washington and an informal local law enforcement liaison committee is now established in any city which the President proposes to visit. A member of the PRS coordinates the activities of each such local committee in the intelligence area and travels with the advance agent to each city. We anticipate that the liaison procedures will be put on a more formal basis as we work out the criteria for high risk individuals and develop the mechanical or electronic devices and procedures necessary to handle a considerably larger input of information.

(c). The Secret Service has no funds for research and very limited funds for the acquisition of protective devices. In the fiscal year 1964 budget the Service requested \$23,057 for two positions for technical specialists. The Congress did not make any appropriation covering this request and it was repeated in the 1965 budget request and has been included in the appropriation passed by the House several weeks ago. Over the years it has worked with other Government agencies to adapt their research to Service's requirements. It has intensified these contacts since the assassination. The Defense Department Office of Advanced Weapons Projects has been working with the Service, automobile manufacturers, and others, to develop secure Presidential automobiles and certain other protective facilities. The Office of the President's Scientific Advisor has assisted the Service in establishing contacts with several commercial firms and working out plans for an automatic data processing card file system for PRS and certain other

projects. We are hopeful that it will be possible soon to place the research and development activities of the Service on a more formal basis.

(d). Since November 22, 1963, the Secret Service has made inspections of buildings along the route of a motorcade to further evaluate the practicability and the usefulness of these checks. It is our opinion that anything we do in this area would furnish some degree of additional protection to the President. However, there are a number of practical limitations to the utility of inspecting buildings prior to a Presidential visit. There are many opportunities for persons to enter buildings after inspection; buildings may be fully occupied during the motorcade and windows may be opened by occupants. We are continuing to evaluate our inspection techniques in the light of the known limitations.

Question No. 5:

In view of such changes that the Secret Service has made or intends to make in its procedures in effect on November 22, 1963, does it require additional funds, equipment or personnel? If so, how much?

Answer:

The Secret Service believes that it will require additional funds; however, until the present studies are completed, it is not possible to state what additional funds, equipment and personnel will be required. In the fiscal year 1965 the Secret Service has requested funds for an additional 25 positions. The House of Representatives has included the requested funds in the Treasury-Post Office Appropriations Bill which it passed several weeks ago. These funds will not be sufficient to take the additional measures which we believe are required. However, since the 1965 budget figures had to be submitted in November, 1963, it was not possible to make specific and properly justified requests at that time. We should be in a position to do so in the fiscal year 1966 budget submission.

Question No. 6:

(a) Would it assist the Secret Service in its Presidential protection functions if murder of or assault upon the President, Vice President, and perhaps other high Government officials, should be made a federal crime?

(b) If assassination or attempted assassination were made a federal crime, which federal law enforcement agencies should be responsible for handling the investigative work?

(c) Would the Secret Service be assisted by a clear statutory expression of its authority in security matters, particularly with respect to the binding effect of its security advice upon the person under its protection?

(d) Is there any other legislative change that might be of assistance to the Secret Service in its Presidential protection functions?

Answers:

We are clearing answers to this question with the Bureau of the Budget and other federal agencies, and will supply a detailed answer when that process is completed.