

Helms: CIA Had Nothing

Following are excerpts from the testimony before the Senate Watergate committee yesterday by former CIA Director Richard Helms. The excerpts begin with the questioning of Helms by assistant committee counsel David Dorsen.

Dorsen: Did you have a conversation with (then deputy CIA director) Gen. (Robert E.) Cushman concerning Howard Hunt in the summer of 1971?

Helms: Yes. I recall that Gen. Cushman informed me that he had authorized giving to Howard Hunt a tape recorder and a camera, and I asked for what purpose and he said he wanted to conduct a one-time interview and that he had been properly authenticated by the White House and that he was working at their best.

Helms: Subsequently . . . I learned, I believe, in a memorandum that Mr. Hunt asked to have a secretary who was stationed with the CIA in Paris brought back from Paris and assigned to him in the White House. He also wanted this to be done secretly and he didn't want anybody to know about it. That, to me, was unacceptable. I saw no reason for this. It seemed to me that the agency was being used, if it was being asked to have somebody brought back to (from) Paris and assigned to man doing unidentified chores at the White House, so I got ahold of Gen. Cushman a man doing unidentified thought this was totally unacceptable and I wouldn't stand for it. I don't recall whether it was then or a few days later but at some point the various additional requests which Hunt was making of the agency seemed to be totally unacceptable, and I asked Gen. Cushman to call Mr. Ehrlichman and tell him that we just weren't going to do this anymore.

Dorsen: . . . Now you have indicated that in your conversation with Gen. Cushman that you indicated to Mr. Gen. Cushman that John Ehrlichman should be called. Why was it that John Ehrlichman was to be called?

Helms: Because it was my distinct impression that he was the one who had arranged with Gen. Cushman to have Hunt get these pieces of equipment.

Dorsen: Ambassador Helms, when for the first time did you learn of the burglary of Dr. Lewis Fieldings' office, that is Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office.

Helms: I forget which weekend in May it was. I think the second weekend of May this year, 1973, I was in Shiraz, and I picked up on Sunday an English language

newspaper and saw on the first page of it there had been a burglary in the office of a psychiatrist in California and the burglary had been done, it was said in the newspaper story, with the assistance of CIA equipment. That was the first time I had ever heard of Dr. Fielding, a burglary, or the fact that Dr. Ellsberg had had a psychiatrist.

Dorsen: Do you know of your own knowledge whether any equipment was used in the burglary that was the property of the CIA?

Helms: I have been assured by members of the agency, and this assurance was given me when I was back here in May testifying before four other congressional committees that the equipment that was given to Hunt was not used in the burglary of Dr. Ellsberg's office, that actually Mr. Hunt was physically not at the office, he was staked out at a doctor — at Dr. Fieldings' residence, and that since he wasn't given any burglary equipment by the agency I have always wondered how it was that he used that equipment in the break-in . . .

Dorsen: Ambassador Helms, during the summer of 1971 did you learn of a request by a member of the White House staff for the Central Intelligence Agency to do a psychological or psychiatric profile of Dr. Ellsberg?

Helms: Yes, I was familiar with this request. Sometime before this Mr. David Young, who was one of the assistants at the White House, had originally been on Dr. Henry Kissinger's staff, informed me that he was being transferred to Mr. (John D.) Ehrlichman's White House staff, in other words, he was going to work for Mr. Ehrlichman, and that he had been given duties in connection with general security procedures in the government, classification of documents, investigation of leaks and a clutch of other such matters.

Subsequent to that, he called me and said that he wanted to get into these things, he wanted to find out how the agency and the intelligence community handled the classification of documents, and other security procedures, and I said I

thought that under the circumstances that the best thing for me to do would be for me to put him in touch with the agency's director of security, a gentleman named Howard Osborne, who would then be able to talk with him and be as responsive to his requests as the agency could be.

It was apparent to Mr. Osborne that Mr. Young originally made the request for a profile on Mr. Ellsberg. Mr. Osborne then brought this request to me.

Dorsen: Excuse me, Ambassador. Could you briefly summarize at the present time what this profile is?

Helms: There had been—well, I guess—I am sort of searching for a word here, but in any event, over a period of some years the agency had developed a technique for putting together a lot of information about a foreigner, maybe a foreign statesman or a foreign dignitary, and then attempting to analyze what sort of a human being he was. These things were called variously, I think, psychological profiles, is as good a title as any, psychological study. The idea was to give insights into what motivated some of these individuals, why they did things the way they did, and so forth.

David Young knew that the agency wrote papers such as this because he had seen them when he was on Dr. Kissinger's staff. So, he then said that he wanted the agency to do this and he remonstrated with him. I said we have nothing—we know nothing about Dr. Ellsberg. I have never laid eyes on him in my life. We have no records on him. We know nothing about him and I think this is an imposition to ask us to do this.

He pled with me. He said that this was very important, that the White House was very much interested in getting this material sorted out, that Mr. Ehrlichman regarded it as highest priority, so did Dr. Kissinger, that we should help, that we were the only ones they knew in town that did things of this kind, had practice in doing them, and please, would we do so . . .

Dorsen: Did the staff of the Central Intelligence Agency thereafter prepare such a profile?

Helms: Yes, they did . . . I understand that it was forwarded to Mr. Young, that it was found to be unsatisfactory, that Mr. Young demonstrated with the people who had written it the fact that it was unsatisfactory. I believe it was . . . I have learned since that it was

to Do With Break-in

pointed out to them that more material was going to have to be provided, otherwise, they couldn't do any better than they had done already, and Mr. Young said all right, we will try and get you some more material, which I believe he did. So that the second profile was written.

Dorsen: And was the second profile delivered to Mr. Young also?

Helms: I believe so . . .

Dorsen: And did you have a conversation with Mr. Young in connection with the delivery of the second profile to him?

Helms: "Yes . . . and I told him that the psychologists and psychiatrists who worked on this were very disturbed about the whole exercise. They didn't feel the material they had been given was adequate, that they were being put in an unfair position, that they didn't want their professional reputations put on the line as a result of this kind of an exercise, and that if he was insisting on having this, then I wanted his understanding and his understanding that he would not identify it for the agency and put these fellows in jeopardy, put these fellows' professional reputation in jeopardy.

Dorsen: During the period that the two profiles were prepared, which I believe was — took us into early November of 1971, what was your understanding as to the identity of the persons over at the White House who were involved in requesting the profile and providing information to the agency for the profile?

Helms: I never heard of anybody being connected with this exercise except Mr. David Young, and when I returned here in May of this year, 1973, I was informed at the agency that during this period, this psychologist who had been consulting with David Young at the White House, that Howard Hunt had been present on one occasion, anyway, and that he had specifically asked not to inform me that he had been present. They certainly did not inform me, so I was totally unaware of his identification with this exercise in any form whatever.

Dorsen: Mr. Helms, I would like now to direct your attention to June of

1972 and ask you when for the first time did you hear of the break-in of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate?

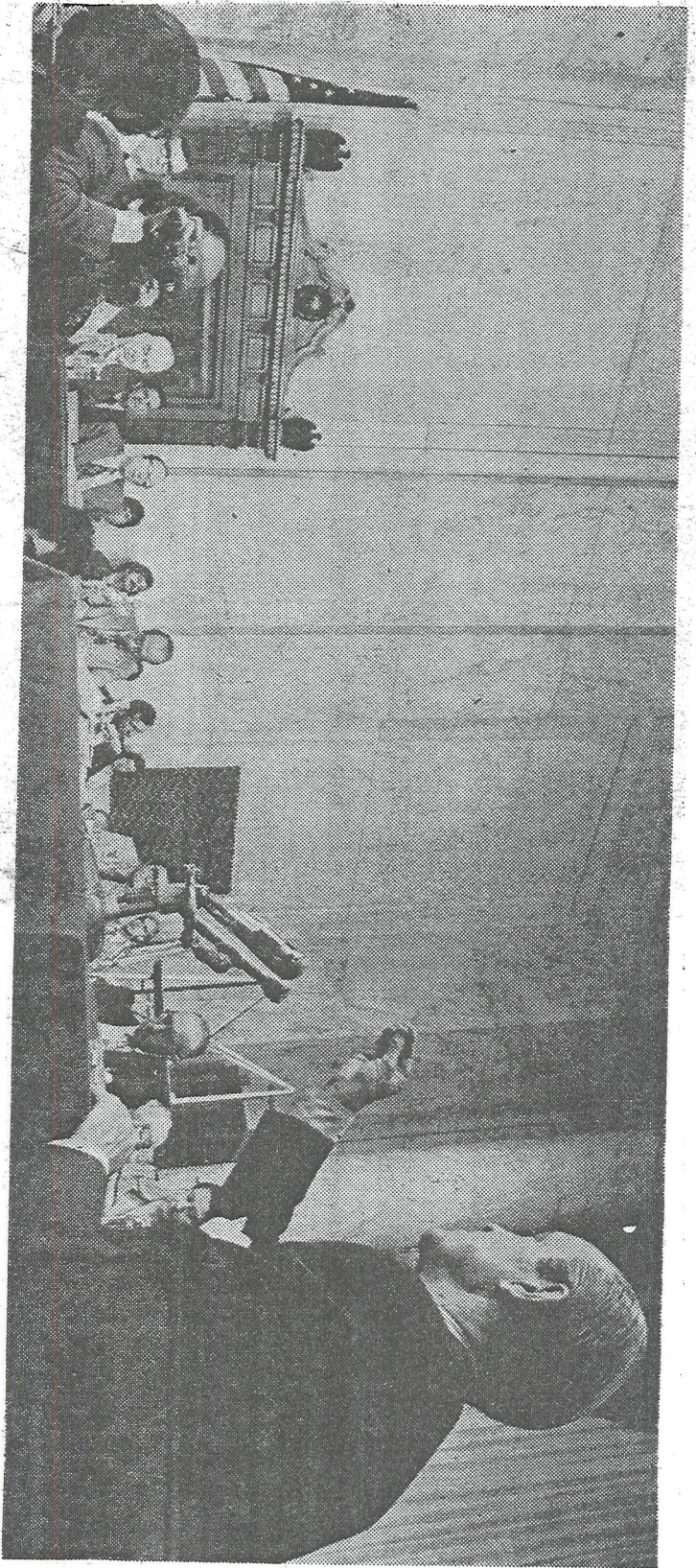
Helms: It is my impression that I heard about it, read about it in the newspapers and heard it on the radio . . .

Dorsen: And during the days immediately following the break-in were there conversations at the CIA concerning the break-in?

Helms: Yes. In the first place, sometime on that weekend I received a telephone call from Mr. Howard Osborne, the Director of Security, to inform me that . . .

Under the gaze of the Senate committee and the eyes of news cameras, former CIA Director Richard Helms, right, responds to a question.

By Bob Burchette—The Washington Post



of the names of the individuals who had participated in the break-in and also to say that Mr. Hunt in some fashion was connected with it. Mr. Osborne's call to me was a perfectly routine matter that had been . . . there was a charge on him as director of security to inform me whenever anybody in the agency got in any kind of trouble, whether they were permanent employees or past employees . . .

Dorsen: Am I correct that James McCord also was a former employee of the agency?

Helms: He was.

Dorsen: And when then did Mr. McCord and Mr. Hunt leave the employ of the agency?

Helms: They left it at different times in 1970. They were both retired, as I recall it.

Dorsen: . . . Did you have a conversation with (then Acting FBI Director) Patrick Gray on that afternoon, namely, the afternoon of June 22?

Helms: I believe that the committee is in possession of a memorandum which says—a memorandum or note from Mr. Gray that says I had this conversation. I have no reason to question that at all. I was talking back and forth with Mr. Gray at various times in connection with this Watergate break-in, so I have no reason to doubt that there was one on the 22d of June.

Dorsen: In these conversations did you discuss the possibility of CIA involvement in the break-in?

Helms: I assured Mr. Gray that the CIA had no involvement in the break-in. No involvement whatever.

And it was my preoccupation consistently from then to this time to make this point and to be sure that everybody understand that. It doesn't seem to get across very well for some reason, but the agency had nothing to do with the Watergate break-in. I hope all the newsmen in the room hear me clearly now.

Dorsen: Mr. Helms, I would like to move then to June 23, 1972, and ask you if you recall attending a meeting with Mr. Ehrlichman, Mr. H. R. (Bob Haldeman), and (deputy CIA director) Gen. Vernon E. Walters.

Helms: I do recall attending that meeting . . . in Mr. Ehrlichman's office on the second floor . . . west wing of the White House . . .

Gen. Walters and I arrived first and waited for a few minutes. Then Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman came into the room, as best I can recall what was said, and Mr. Haldeman did most of the talking, so — and whatever Mr. Ehrlichman contributed in the course of this was either to nod his head or smile or to agree with what Mr. Haldeman said. I just simply want to introduce it this way because it is a little easier for me to describe.

Mr. Haldeman said that there was a lot of flak about the Watergate burglary, that the opposition was capitalizing on it that it was going to — it was apparently causing some sort of unified trouble, and he wanted to know whether the agency had anything to do with it. I assured him that the agency had nothing to do with it.

He then said that the five

men who had been found in the Democratic National Committee headquarters had been arrested and that that seemed to be adequate under the circumstances, that the FBI was investigating what this was all about, and that they, unified, were concerned about some FBI investigations in Mexico.

He also at that time made some, what to me was an incoherent reference to an investigation in Mexico, or an FBI investigation, running into the Bay of Pigs. I do not know what the reference was alleged to be, but in any event, I assured him that I had no interest in the Bay of Pigs that many years later, that everything in connection with that had been dealt with and liquidated as far as I was aware and I did not care what they ran into in connection with that.

At some juncture in this conversation, Mr. Haldeman then said something to the effect that it has been decided that Gen. Walters will go and talk to Acting Director Gray of the FBI and indicate to him that these operations — these investigations of the FBI might run into CIA operations in Mexico and that it was desirable that this not happen and that the investi-

gation, therefore, should be either tapered off or reduced or something, but there was no language saying stopped, as far as I recall.

At this point, the references to Mexico were quite unclear to me. I had to recognize that if the White House, the President, Mr. Haldeman, somebody in high authority, had information about something in Mexico which I did not have information about, which is quite possible — the White House constantly has information which others do not have — that it would be a prudent thing for me to find out if there was any possibility that some CIA operation was being — was going to be affected, and, therefore, I wanted the necessary time to do this.

I say this in explanation of the fact that there seems — that since I had consistently pointed out that no CIA operations had been violated by any investigation up to then, that we had had nothing to do with the Watergate burglary, the fact of the matter was that if an investigation continued to go on it might run into something we were doing in Mexico. This possibility always had to exist. Nobody knows everything about everything.

So at this point I think it was repeated a second time that Gen. Walters was to go and see Acting Director Gray with this charge. It was then indicated that Acting Director Gray would probably be expecting the call, that he was looking for some kind of guidance in this matter, and that this should take place as soon as possible.

I believe Mr. Ehrlichman at that point made his sole contribution to the conversation, which was that he should get down and see Gray just as fast as he could.

We left this meeting, Gen. Walters and I, and went downstairs to the automobile, and I spoke to Gen. Walters along the following lines: I said when you got to see Acting Director Gray, I think you should confine yourself to reminding him that the agency and the FBI have a delimitation agreement, an understanding for many years that if the agency runs into any FBI agents or operations, the FBI shall be immediately notified and if the FBI runs into any agents or operations, it shall be immediately notified.

I was not sure whether Acting Director Gray was familiar with this because he had not been acting director of the FBI for very long. I wanted Gen. Walters to understand about this because he had been with the

agency, I think, only about six weeks at that time, had been having briefings, and I was not sure whether this had ever come to his attention.

In other words, I was asking him to make a legitimate request of the acting director of the FBI that if they ran into any CIA operations in Mexico or any place else they were to notify us immediately and I thought Gen. Walters should restrict his conversation with Acting Director Gray to that point. Precisely whether he did or not, well, you will have an opportunity to ask him.

Dorsen: To your knowledge, did Gen. Walters have a meeting with Patrick Gray?

Helms: Yes, he had one very shortly after this meeting in the White House because he reported to me later in the day about his meeting with Gray, that he had been to see him, that the general purport of what they had discussed, and then the first time I learned that Acting Director Gray had told Gen. Walters at this meeting about some money having been sent to Mexico.

I was unaware of any money having been sent there at the time, and even that explanation did not say what the money was for. But also floating around in this at the time was the name of a Mexican lawyer that we had been asked to check out by the FBI to find out if this man was in any way connected with the CIA.

His name was Ogarrio, I believe, and we had been running traces, which is a word of art of going through the record to find out and check with our people in Mexico to see if they knew him, and so forth, and it was some day subsequent that we got the information back that he was indeed a lawyer in Mexico, but we had never had any connection with him and so I notified the FBI.

Dorsen: Now, on Monday, June 26th, did Gen. Walters receive a telephone call from (presidential counsel) John Dean?

Helms: Gen. Walters told me that he had been called by a man he did not know in the White House named John Dean, and that Dean had asked to see him, and when Walters said, "Well, what do you want to see me about," and so forth, I believe Dean referred to the matters on which we had talked with Haldeman and Ehrlichman on the previous Friday. In any event, Dean said to Gen. Walters, "If you want to verify my bona fides and who I am and my authority to talk with you, please call John Ehrlichman."

So by the time Walters talked to me he said he had talked to Dean, had verified by telephone conversation with Ehrlichman that it was all right to talk to Dean and that he was going down to see him.

Dorsen: When Gen. Walters came back from seeing Mr. Dean, did he talk to you about the meeting?

Helms: He reported the meeting to me and told me that Dean had raised with him this question of the Watergate burglary, that there was a lot, there were a lot of problems in connection with it, problems unidentified. Was there any way in which the agency could help, and so on.

It was quite clear that some kind of feelers were being put out to see (a) if there was any agency involvement or, (b) whether the Agency was prepared to assist in some way which was not at all identified.

It was at this meeting with Gen. Walters when he was reporting this to me that I told him that I wanted him to be absolutely certain that he permitted nothing to happen using the agency's name, facilities or anything else in connection with this business.

I said I did not care whether he wanted to be a scapegoat, I did not care

whether he was prepared to quit on the issue, I did not care anything about that. I simply wanted him to do absolutely nothing because I told him point blank even though he was a military officer and even though he was a presidential appointee, that if he did something wrong it would besmirch the name of the agency no matter whether he took the blame or not, and that was simply not going to happen and I wanted him to be abundantly clear on this in any conversation he had with Mr. Dean or anybody else, and he reported to me on the subsequent two conversations with Mr. Dean I not only re-affirmed this but I said, "You hang in there, you are doing fine, but don't you yield an inch."

Dorsen: . . . Could you briefly summarize, of course, ambassador, what Gen. Walters told you with respect to the meeting of the 27th and the meeting of the 28th?

Helms: It is my recollection that it was at the meeting of the 27th . . . that the issue first came up of whether or not the CIA out of its covert funds was prepared to provide bail money for the defendants in the Watergate burglary. Not only did this issue come up, but I also believe that the additional point was made would it be possible for the CIA to pay the salaries of these individuals while they served their jail sentences. Gen. Walters . . . pointed out to Mr. Dean that the agency could not possibly do anything like that. That he (Walters) had no authority to do it on his own, that his authority is derived from me and that he knew what my position was, and in addition, he said he could not conceivably imagine that a thing like that would remain secret forever, and last but not least, under the ground rules which we operate with

the Congress, or which the agency operates with the Congress of the United States, any exceptional expenditure of this kind would have to be identified with the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. This obviously cooled Mr. Dean's order . . .

Fred Thompson, the committee's minority counsel, then questioned Helms about his conversation with then Acting FBI Director Gray.

Thompson: As I understand it, you had a conversation with Patrick Gray on June 22 when you advised him that the CIA was not involved in the break-in. Was your conversation limited to CIA involvement of the break-in or did you go into whether or not the investigation might uncover other CIA operations possibly.

Helms: I don't recall ever discussing with Mr. Gray this question of its uncovering other CIA operations.

Thompson: Strictly the break-in discussion?

Helms: We had no involvement and I believe as part of this conversation there was this business about the Mexican lawyer, I don't recall whether he was specifically mentioned, the Mexican lawyer was mentioned at that time, but Mr. Gray had on his mind in some way the idea that there was some CIA involvement that they were running into and I was attempting to reassure him that this was not the case as best I knew it.

Thompson: CIA involvement in the Watergate break-in itself?

Helms: Or in some way connected with it.

Thompson: . . . Did he state the source of his concern?

Helms: He never did.

Thompson: Did he indicate whether or not it was due to the bureau's own investigation or whether or not someone else had told

him that from outside the bureau?

Helms: I was unable to tell. I simply was surprised that this kept coming up.

Thompson: So the next day you had the conversation with Mr. Walters and Mr. Haldeman, Mr. Ehrlichman as I understand. I would like to go over briefly what you stated was discussed in that conversation. I believe you stated that Mr. Haldeman indicated that the Watergate was being capitalized on, that five members had been arrested and that seemed adequate and that sort of thing. Obviously the Watergate investigation was the reason for the meeting, was it not, as to what the investigation might disclose. That was the basis for the meeting.

Helms: Well, I can only assume in hindsight that it was, Mr. Thompson, because at the time nobody had identified to us why we were being called to the White House . . .

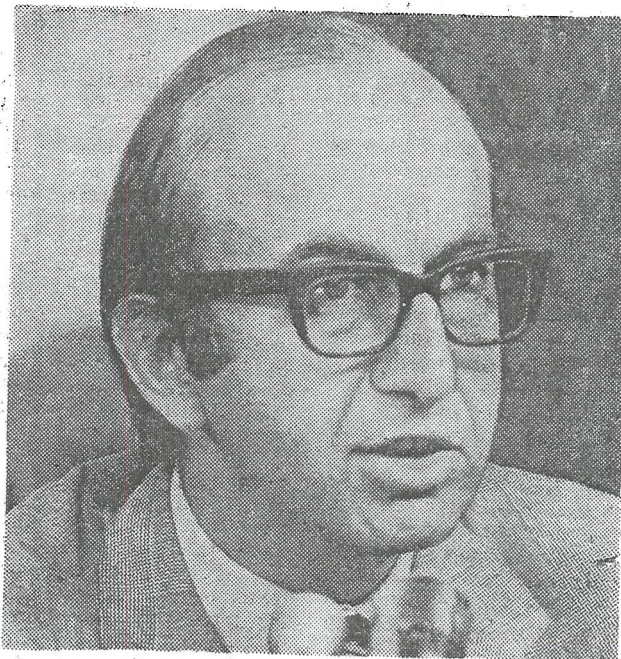
Thompson: When they stated their concern about possible Mexican involvement with the CIA, of course they were talking about the Watergate investigation turning up other involvement, were they not?

Helms: I assumed this is what they were talking about, yes. But as I mentioned a moment ago and I do want to underline this, I was totally unfamiliar at that time with what Mexico had to do with anything.

Thompson: But you had talked to Pat Gray the day before and I believe you stated that you thought that he might have mentioned a Mexican lawyer at that time.

Helms: Yes, sir, but when the Mexican lawyer's name was mentioned it was never any implication as to why they were even asking about him, so that this was not very revealing.

Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), vice chairman of the committee, then questioned Helms about the assistance the CIA gave to Howard Hunt in 1971.



By Bob Burchette—The Washington Post

Assistant Chief Counsel Dave Dorsen begins questioning of former CIA Director Richard Helms yesterday.

Baker: . . . On July 22 (1971), Hunt visited Gen. Cushman and requested the agency, the CIA, to furnish him with identification documents, an alias, and physical disguises. Are you aware of that?

Helms: Yes, I am. . . .

Baker: And they were supplied.

Helms: I believe—yes, yes.

Baker: Did you later learn on good authority, particularly from agency authority, that Hunt requested and received bogus identification documents, an alias and a physical disguise?

Helms: Yes. There was a voice changer, wasn't it, and a wig?

Baker: I was coming to that. Then on several occasions Hunt met with CIA people and received further alias documentation, specifically the name of Edward Joseph Warren, disguise material which I believe may have included a wig, a

speech alteration device which some of us would devoutly wish for, a recorder in a typewriter case and a camera in a tobacco pouch.

Helms: I have heard that is what he was given. . . .

Baker: . . . on Aug. 26 you were advised of increasing demands made by Mr. Hunt—he had already made several which had been acceded to, the ones I have just described—increasing demands from CIA for technical and other assistance, including that to be supplied with a personal secretary then located in Paris. Did you have personal knowledge of that?

Helms: I did and it was at that time that I spoke to Gen. Cushman as I have already said.

Baker: That was in effect the straw that broke the camel's back.

Helms: Yes, sir, you put that well.

Baker: And you declined to go any further and my information based on the staff interview with you, Mr. Ambassador, indicates that you were appraised of these facts by Cushman and that you told Cushman that Hunt had now gone too far and that Cushman should tell Ehrlichman that no further assistance would be afforded to Hunt.

Helms: Yes, sir.

Baker: Cushman did apprise Ehrlichman on Aug. 27 . . . and on Aug. 30 Cushman sent you a memorandum on which you wrote the word "good."

Helms: Yes, sir. . . .

Baker: Mr. Helms, is it clear from all of this that the CIA at whatever level, and you to some extent, were aware of the fact that Mr. Hunt, at least, was deeply involved in White House activity with CIA support and that you blew the whistle after a great number of things had already occurred?

Helms: Senator Baker, if we go to July and August of 1971, I certainly was totally unaware of any illegal activity, any improper activity, or anything that would have raised a question about the type of thing that Mr. Hunt was involved in. I assure you there hadn't been any intimation whatever that there was any question of a burglary, there was any question of stealing anything, there was any question of his having committed any illegal or improper acts.

Baker: I don't doubt that, Mr. Helms. . . .

Now, let's see how that goes. We have got Hunt, we have got (James) McCord, we have got (Bernard) Barker, we have got (Frank) Sturgis, we have got (Eugenio) Martinez (all five are convicted Watergate conspirators). We have got two sets of forged identity documents.

We have got a voice alteration device. We have a wig, a camera, a tobacco pouch. We have got the processing service for that. We have got the certain knowledge that all these things were discussed between White House staff and CIA staff and I wonder if that doesn't lead us to the idea that when these people are caught that somebody would certainly say, well, what was the CIA involvement?

Helms: Well, Senator Baker, I have the greatest respect for you and if you would . . . if those were the thought processes that have gone through your mind I have no reason to argue with them. I simply a moment ago was not trying to make a self-serving statement. I was simply trying to indicate that there has been a tendency, it seems to me, in recent times to have everything run in reel time, as though all of these things were known and happened and that, therefore, one should have had the good sense to know this thing or that thing at a certain period of time and I simply was trying to point out that this was not the case.