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COMMITTEE CONFIDENTIAL

DEPOSITION OF RICHARD V. ALLEN

Tuesday, June 23, 1992

U.S. Senate
Select Committee on POW/MIA
Affairs
Washington, D.C.

Deposition of RICHARD V. ALLEN, a witness herein, called for examination by counsel for the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, was convened at 2:04 p.m., in S-407, The Capitol, on Tuesday, June 23, 1992, the witness being duly sworn by ANNE P. HOROWITZ, a Notary Public in and for the District of Columbia, and the proceedings having been taken down by Stenomask by ANNE P. HOROWITZ and transcribed under her direction.

Present from the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs:

J. WILLIAM CODINHA, ESQ., Chief Counsel
ROBERT TAYLOR, Investigator

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Attachment 6

43, 64, 80, 82-83, 85

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1		C O N T E N T S	
2	THE WITNESS	EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR	
3	RICHARD V. ALLEN	THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS	
4	By Mr. Codinha		3

6		E X H I B I T S	
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1 new intelligence charter that was created in the early months
2 of the Reagan administration, for which I had the
3 responsibility of coordinating and shepherding, but I couldn't
4 obviously attend the working group meetings. So Gregg and
5 whoever else -- Gregg and my secretary calls it the geezer
6 gap -- Ken de Graffenreid. De Graffenreid worked under Gregg
7 and de Graffenreid was a political appointee from our side.

8 Q. In terms of intelligence, what written intelligence
9 summaries did the President receive on a daily basis? Did he
10 get a daily intelligence briefing by the CIA?

11 A. Well what is called the PDB, the President's Daily
12 Brief. This is the instrument that Bill Casey and I shaped to
13 fit the needs. Of course, the President will always get a
14 daily brief of some kind. We called it the PDB and gave it
15 some new architecture for -- to suit the way the President
16 liked to read things.

17 Casey and I, Richard Kerr, Richard Lehman of the
18 CIA, worked hard on putting that document into more useable
19 form. Carter had -- President Carter had wanted to consume
20 lots of minutiae and detail; we made it more thematic but
21 still quite ample. So the President would receive that every
22 day.

23 That would be briefed to me early in the morning,
24 about 6:30, at the White House. And then I would prepare for
25 my 9:00 meeting with the President after having had a senior

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1 staff meeting. And if anything were relevant at that time, I
2 would bring it up at the senior staff meeting, then a wider
3 staff meeting, and then my meeting with the President.

4 So others received copies of the PBD as well, Meese
5 and Baker, because they were members of the National Security
6 Council as well. And I guess that's about it. I took it to
7 the President, the President would read it, I would usually
8 bring it back.

9 That was the formal structure. During the periods
10 of time -- the time the President was incapacitated, I think
11 it was sent over to him or I took it over to him at the
12 hospital or at the residence. And in my absence, somebody
13 else would take it to him and brief. In addition, he received
14 whatever else I thought was necessary. There were frequent
15 DIA contributions that I thought particularly meritorious, and
16 he would get those.

17 So the President received a constant flow. Also for
18 his weekend reading file, which I started, a practice which I
19 started -- actually, I guess I resumed, because President
20 Nixon liked to have a weekend reading file. I loaded it up
21 with lots of reports, some of them specially generated, that I
22 would have generated from the intelligence community expressly
23 for his reading.

24 Q. Going back for a moment to the PDB, the President's
25 Daily Briefings, how long -- how much written material would

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1 be given to him?

2 A. 10 or 12 pages.

3 Q. 10 or 12.

4 A. With photographs and maps. And then separate maps
5 and illustrations and briefings as necessary. I might say
6 also that from time to time there were video presentations
7 that I arranged for the President on a very -- very very
8 sensitive data.

9 Q. With respect to the 10 or 12 page briefing that you
10 were briefed on at 6:30 in the morning, who would brief you?

11 A. Dick-- Richard Kerr, who recently departed DDCI.

12 Q. And how long would that briefing usually last?

13 A. It could be 5 minutes, it could be 15. It was
14 efficient -- an efficient process.

15 Q. Then would you actually review all of the pages that
16 the President was going to see at 9:00?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And then you said the next thing that would happen
19 is you'd have a senior staff meeting.

20 A. I'd go to a senior staff meeting, right.

21 Q. And how long did that meeting last?

22 A. About 30 minutes. 30 to 40 minutes, perhaps.

23 Q. Was the FDB discussed at the senior staff meeting.

24 A. No, they didn't have the need to know. It was
25 compartmentalized.

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1 Q. What was the senior staff meeting? What did that
2 deal with?

3 A. Everything of the day. The entire agenda for the
4 day, the week, the month, what was coming up. It consisted of
5 about 12 of the assistants to the President, I think we had 10
6 or 11 or 12. All of them plus some deputies and press people.

7 Q. You said the next thing that would happen would be a
8 wider staff meeting after the senior staff meeting.

9 A. Generally Meese and Martin Anderson, the domestic
10 advisor, and I would get together on policy matters, if I
11 didn't hold a staff meeting of my own before going to see the
12 President.

13 Q. And did this happen on a daily basis?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And then you said at 9:00 you would brief the
16 President.

17 A. Usually, 9:00, 9:15.

18 Q. And would that take place at the Oval Office?

19 A. It would.

20 Q. And how long did that meeting last?

21 A. It depended on the number of jokes that the
22 President had. It would begin fairly promptly after some few
23 introductory remarks, and would generally last 15, sometimes
24 30, sometimes 45 minutes or an hour, depending on the subject
25 raised.

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1 Q. Did the President receive any separate operational
2 daily or weekly intelligence reports from the CIA?

3 A. I think from time to time Bill Casey wanted and got
4 private time with the President. I can't say whether those
5 were reports or those were other kinds of discussions.

6 Q. Would you review the materials that Bill Casey would
7 show the President?

8 A. Usually always. We were very close friends and had
9 been for many many years, and there was -- I think he had no
10 reason to keep anything from me, but I would not have been
11 offended had he done so.

12 Q. You indicated that this was private time. Does that
13 mean that you were not present at those meetings?

14 A. Yes. And the Secretary of State also wanted private
15 time, but was less successful in getting it.

16 Q. After assuming office, did President Reagan ask for
17 and receive intelligence briefings on the possibility that
18 live POW's were still in Southeast Asia?

19 A. He did.

20 Q. And when do you recall that happening?

21 A. Well I'll have to get some help from you in terms of
22 timing, because I can't exactly recall now. But this
23 basically came, I think, at my instigation. You recall the
24 name Bo Gritz. I'm trying to remember when Bo Gritz became an
25 issue for us. I think he had already been active in the years

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1 of the Carter administration, but I'm not sure doing exactly
2 what.

3 There was a great concern about Mr. Bo Gritz,
4 probably located in the State Department more than anyplace
5 else, this concern. Maybe some concern also in the Department
6 of Defense that Mr. Gritz was a lone ranger, a swashbuckler, a
7 daring do-type, who set out on missions that were -- that
8 could cause trouble for the United States.

9 And I recall having a discussion with the President.
10 I had -- my own view on Mr. Gritz was that -- I guess he
11 doesn't mind being called Mister. Is he still alive?

12 Q. Oh, Bo Gritz is still alive.

13 A. That Mr. Gritz -- telling the President that Mr.
14 Gritz probably ought to be left alone, and I wasn't going to
15 do anything to interfere with what Mr. Gritz was doing.
16 Because it seemed to me that he was doing as good a job as
17 anyone else in and having a look at the existence of POW's.

18 And he was in Southeast Asia at that time and I
19 remember that time being probably the spring, early spring of
20 1981, trying to assemble equipment, and also back in this
21 country trying to raise money for future forays into Laos and
22 Vietnam. And while I can't exactly remember who it was that
23 was doing most of the complaining about Gritz, it struck me as
24 being something that was reasonable. If he wanted to go ahead
25 and do that and it was on his own time, it was all right with

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1 me and he wasn't disturbing the borders of any friendly
2 country.

3 And so I explained that to the President; at least I
4 presented that to the President, shall I say.

5 (Discussion off the record.)

6 MR. CODINHA: Why don't we take a 5 minute break.

7 (Recess.)

8 MR. CODINHA: Why don't we resume.

9 BY MR. CODINHA:

10 Q. I believe when we broke I had asked -- the question
11 I had asked you was after assuming office, did President
12 Reagan ask for and receive intelligence briefings on the
13 possibility of live POW's who were still in Southeast Asia.
14 And you said yes he had. And I asked when, and you said you
15 believed it was the spring of 1981 and tied it to Bo Gritz.

16 A. Yes. At any rate, I thought that these events were
17 worth reporting to the President, and we had several
18 discussions about the issue. At about the same time a CIA
19 photo interpreter was brought to my office. No, a photo was
20 brought to my office.

21 And it was explained to me that in this photograph,
22 if I looked carefully, I would find stamped in the ground, in
23 the grass, a quite distinct pattern of what was called a rap
24 code that the prisoners used in Vietnamese prisons. And so
25 the photo interpreter was brought over and looked at this

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1 photograph, and for the life of me I can't remember what the
2 numbers were, but it was something like 3162 or 5138 or
3 whatever.

4 And sure enough, with an overhead -- this was an
5 overhead photograph -- there was what looked like the rap
6 code. I don't know, I've forgotten what it meant or whatever.
7 But when explained to me at the time, 11 years ago, it looked
8 to me to be very significant. And so I took this up to the
9 President and I showed the President. I said now here's --
10 the theory is that this photograph contains a picture of a
11 prison compound and that in the exercise yard the prisoners
12 walked the pattern of the rap code. Have you heard this story
13 before?

14 Q. Not precisely this way.

15 A. Okay, well anyway, this is the way I remember it.
16 So this was the rap code. And that, in effect, said help from
17 above or here we are. Now no one was ever 100 percent
18 certain. The question was what do we do about it, and the
19 proposal -- either I stimulated or I accepted and encouraged a
20 proposal to send a team in to have a look. I went to the
21 President and asked him what he thought about it. He didn't
22 take 5 seconds but to authorize that such an expedition be
23 launched, and they went about assembling it.

24 It seemed to me that it took awfully long to get it
25 assembled, an unbelievably long period of time to get it

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1 assembled. I believe they assembled in Northeast Thailand. I
2 believe they had to go through part of Laos. We were out of
3 contact. I guess those were days before we had adequate
4 communications. They could not be in contact at all times,
5 and they proceeded in. The President was asking -- asked
6 virtually every day, what about the progress of this mission,
7 because he was quite excited about its potential.

8 My recollection is that the group got into a fire
9 fight, I guess with the North Vietnamese. Either they had
10 Montagnards or Laotians of some description, who were taking
11 them in. A couple of them were hit and they had to bring them
12 back. There were wounded and/or killed, I can't remember
13 which.

14 And when -- they supposedly went back again after
15 having brought back the wounded casualties, and as I recall
16 resupplied and went back again. It is my recollection -- I
17 don't think I dreamed this, but it is my recollection that
18 they eventually got to the site, but they didn't get literally
19 inside. But by the time they got to the site the site had
20 been abandoned. Whereas it had not been, definitely not been
21 uninhabited at the time of the sighting of what was purported
22 to be the rap code walked into the grass.

23 So I thought this was an extraordinary thing, and
24 it's -- the recollection has never left me. And I just
25 wondered if there might have not been another more efficient

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1 way to go about getting the team in there. It turned out
2 there was not, and I guess nothing else ever came of it.

3 It would be interesting today to go back and to find
4 those photographs -- because the coordinates were very
5 precise, you could find it down to a few meters -- and go in
6 and have a look and see what's there. With the question --
7 the obvious question is were they moved, were they harmed, if
8 they were there.

9 And ever since -- that strengthened my belief in the
10 presence of POW's and MIA's, my personal belief. And also I
11 think there was a strong belief by the Vietnam groups that I
12 was meeting with relatively regularly at the time, or whenever
13 they wanted to meet. And there's the POW/MIA type groups such
14 as the League of Families and, as I recall there was also some
15 division -- I never quite understood the politics of the
16 movement, of the POW/MIA movement. There was quite vicious
17 politics, I gather, that eventually developed.

18 And I sort of lost touch with the issue as I went on
19 to other things, but I never forgo the experience.

20 Q. Let me examine some of the things you have said.
21 Does -- what you described to me break out into two separate
22 areas, the Bo Gritz and the CIA analysis. Let's talk first
23 about the CIA analysis. When do you recall that happening?

24 A. I can't tell you exactly. But I -- my recollection
25 captures it at some time in the spring of 1981.

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