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First, it assumes that Dulles himself knew of the plots, a matter which is not certain. Second, it assumes that Dulles went privately to the two Presidents--a course of action which Helms, who had far more covert action experience than Bissell, testified was precisely what the doctrine of plausible denial forbade CIA officials from doing. Third, it necessarily assumes that the Presidents would understand from a "circumlocutious" description that assassination was being discussed.

The chain of assumptions is far too speculative for the Committee to make findings implicating Presidents who are not able to speak for themselves. Moreover, it is inconsistent with Bissell's other testimony that "formal and explicit" approval would be required for assassination,* and contrary to the testimony of all the Presidential advisors, the men closest to both Eisenhower and Kennedy.

* If the evidence concerning President Eisenhower's order to assassinate Lumumba is correct, it should be weighed against Bissell's testimony concerning circumlocutious briefings of the Presidents in the Castro case. First, the Lumumba case would imply that President Eisenhower and Dulles did discuss such matters bluntly and not circumlocu-

tiously. Second, the Lumumba example indicates that the President would discuss such matters openly in an appropriate forum, and would not need to be approached privately. Third, it can be inferred from Bissell's testimony in the Castro case that if President Eisenhower had told Dulles that he approved of the plot, Dulles would not have told anyone else of that fact. Yet Gottlieb's testimony in the Lumumba case states that he had been told of Presidential authorization for assassination by Bissell, who in turn assumed he was told by Dulles.