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EXECUTIVE
SESSION

Original

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Secret

EXECUTIVE SESSION
DEPOSITIONS OF JOHN A. RIZZO
AND CHARLES G. COGAN

Monday, December 21, 1992

U.S. House of Representatives
October Surprise Task Force
Washington, D.C.

Committee Hearings
of the
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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EXECUTIVE SESSION

1 [Mr. Cogan was sworn.]

2 Mr. Laufman. While we are waiting for the cleared
3 reporter, this might be a good opportunity to ask you about
4 something that doesn't have classified problems in it, and
5 it relates, Mr. Cogan, to a vignette that you recounted in
6 your testimony before the Senate October Surprise Committee
7 some weeks ago. At that time, you recounted an incident or
8 a story where during the period where Bill Casey was DCI, as
9 I recall it, you were walking into Casey's office and coming
10 out of Casey's office was Joseph Reed, Ambassador Joseph
11 Reed, then the United States Ambassador to Morocco, and as I
12 recall it, you were relating a comment you overheard in
13 which the words October surprise were contained.

14 Am I ringing any bells here.

15 Mr. Cogan. Oh, yes. This is -- I have definite memory
16 of this.

17 Mr. Laufman. Why don't you tell us the story from
18 start to finish in your own words.

19 Mr. Cogan. I recall, I was leaving Casey's office and
20 it was -- Joseph Reed was coming in. It was not long after
21 the 1980 election. Casey was on seat at DCI and I
22 overheard -- I can't quite recall the exact word that was
23 used or the verb, but it was -- Joseph Reed said, we, and
24 then the verb, something about Carter's October surprise.
25 The implication was we did something about Carter's October

1 surprise, but I don't have the exact wording.

2 I might add, if I may, that although this doesn't
3 particularly pertain to it, I have given testimony to the
4 Senate, I am giving testimony to the House now, and I am not
5 sure it is exact, but more importantly, before the House
6 here, I have read some documents that I didn't have access
7 to when I testified before the Senate, so I just want to
8 make that clear that I may be -- I may seem more
9 knowledgeable to the House because I have had access to
10 these documents which I didn't have access to in the Senate,
11 and I have a habit -- in fact, I think John will agree with
12 this, I am known in the service as somebody who does total
13 recording at the time. All my reports are very voluminous
14 and detailed.

15 Mr. Laufman. For which we are very grateful.

16 Mr. Cogan. That doesn't mean that I can recall it
17 all.

18 Mr. Laufman. Are there any documents that you know of
19 relating to this particular story.

20 Mr. Cogan. No, none whatsoever. That is why I said
21 this is not on that point particularly, but I wanted to say
22 this at the outset.

23 Mr. Laufman. Are you clear in your mind that it was
24 Ambassador Reed as opposed to Bill Casey who made the
25 comment about October surprise.

1 Mr. Cogan. Yes. Yes, I am.

2 Mr. Laufman. Are you an acquaintance of Ambassador
3 Reed.

4 Mr. Cogan. Yes. I am a very close acquaintance.

5 Mr. Laufman. Have you ever had occasion to ask him
6 about this comment.

7 Mr. Cogan. I did tell him that I had said that,
8 because this came up a long time ago when I was first
9 contacted by the staff of the Senate, and I -- this stuck in
10 my mind and I told Joseph Reed that I was -- I don't recall
11 exactly what I said, but I said I was being asked about this
12 and this is what I had said.

13 Mr. Laufman. So you spoke with Reed after you had
14 given your Senate testimony or before.

15 Mr. Cogan. No, I think it was before. It was before,
16 yes. It was before, yes.

17 Mr. Rizzo. I can clarify that.

18 Mr. Cogan. I checked this out with John, my counsel
19 here, because I came to him and I said, look, this is a
20 funny incident that sticks in the back of my mind.

21 Mr. Rizzo. Chuck called me. This would have been.

22 Mr. Shaffer. You have to be sworn.

23 [Mr. Rizzo was sworn].

24 Mr. Rizzo. The time frame here was, I believe, I want
25 to say early 1991. This was when, in the context of the

1 Gates confirmation hearings, Senator Nunn, who was a member
2 of the Senate Intelligence Committee, had expressed an
3 interest in these October surprise allegations. I think
4 this would have been right around the time of Gary Sick's
5 op-ed piece, and he had dispatched a staffer of his to do a
6 preliminary inquiry and it was in response to that staffer's
7 inquiry that Chuck was -- Chuck was contacted, and
8 remembered this incident and asked me whether I thought it
9 would be appropriate or okay for him to at least tell
10 Ambassador Reed that he was going to testify to this. So
11 that is my recollection.

12 Mr. Shaffer. Why did -- could you tell by the
13 questions that were asked by the staff member from Nunn's
14 office why they were bringing this to you guys at all? What
15 made them think they should talk to you or Mr. Cogan about
16 this issue?

17 Mr. Rizzo. It had nothing to do with Reed. This was
18 something that was in my mind and the subject was October
19 surprise and that is what surfaced it. They didn't come to
20 me about Reed or anything. No.

21 Mr. Shaffer. They came to you about October surprise
22 generally?

23 Mr. Rizzo. And this was in the back of my mind.

24 They asked if the agency would have been knowledgeable
25 about October surprise. Since Chuck was the head of the

1 Near East Division for that period of time, we put them in
2 touch with Chuck.

3 Mr. Laufman. Mr. Cogan, you mentioned a moment ago
4 that you had occasion to relate your memory of this story to
5 Ambassador Reed.

6 Mr. Cogan. Yes.

7 Mr. Laufman. Can you tell us about that conversation
8 you had with Mr. Reed.

9 Mr. Cogan. I called him up. He was at his farm in
10 Connecticut, as I recall, and I just told him that, look,
11 this is what sticks in my mind and what I am going to say,
12 and he didn't have any comment on it and continued on to
13 other matters.

14 Mr. Laufman. Did you ask him the question, "What was
15 it Ambassador Reed you were referring to about that comment
16 about October surprise".

17 Mr. Cogan. No, I didn't. I didn't.

18 Mr. Laufman. How come.

19 Mr. Cogan. Well, I didn't want to appear as though I
20 was investigating him. I just wanted to get it out. Since
21 we were friends, I wanted to let him know up front that I
22 was going to say this because I felt I should say it.

23 Mr. Laufman. He didn't offer any explanation to you of
24 what he meant.

25 Mr. Cogan. No.

1 Mr. Shaffer. Nor did he deny that he had said it.

2 Mr. Cogan. He didn't say anything. We just continued
3 on talking about other things.

4 Mr. Laufman. Did he indicate one way or the other
5 whether he had a memory of making the comment.

6 Mr. Cogan. No.

7 Mr. Laufman. No.

8 Mr. Cogan. We have talked since, but it has never come
9 up again and I didn't give him chapter and verse on
10 everything I have said to the committees on this. I warned
11 him about it beforehand, which was what I thought was the
12 extent of my obligation to do so.

13 Mr. Laufman. Did he respond in any way to your raising
14 this matter with him.

15 Mr. Cogan. Not that I know of. I have had no
16 feedback. But I did talk to him once or twice after that
17 and he never brought it up; just friendly talk.

18 Mr. Laufman. Have you ever discussed the story of
19 hearing this comment by Reed about the October surprise with
20 anyone else who did have knowledge as to what was meant.

21 Mr. Cogan. The only persons I have discussed it with
22 is John Rizzo, another close friend of mine in the service,
23 John McCaffen, and my wife. Maybe my brother, but that is
24 it.

25 Mr. Laufman. To your knowledge, were Casey and Reed

1 friends.

2 Mr. Cogan. Yes, in the sense that they were both in
3 the Republican campaign. I think Reed was in -- I think he
4 was. I am not sure of this, but he is a Republican
5 definitely. I think he was involved in the campaign in
6 1980. I think, I am not sure. Of course Casey was. Casey
7 was the campaign manager of some sorts. I think Reed was
8 involved somehow. That is easily checkable.

9 Mr. Leon. Was he the political ambassador.

10 Mr. Cogan. Yes.

11 Mr. Leon. As opposed to a career ambassador.

12 Mr. Cogan. Absolutely a political ambassador, and he
13 was named to be Ambassador of Morocco shortly after
14 President Reagan came in. It had been somebody else
15 apparently in line and David Rockefeller intervened and
16 others intervened, I am sure, and Joseph Reed got the job.

17 Mr. Laufman. Just so I understand the physical
18 circumstances of your hearing this comment, you said that
19 you were leaving Director Casey's office and Reed was coming
20 in. To your knowledge, was anyone around you within ear
21 shot of this conversation.

22 Mr. Cogan. No, not to my recollection, no.

23 Mr. Laufman. Anyone else come up to you later that day
24 or soon thereafter saying what was that all about, what do
25 you know about this.

1 Mr. Cogan. Hum-hum.

2 Mr. Shaffer. Nobody else in the room but the three of
3 you.

4 Mr. Cogan. It was in the doorway. Nobody else around,
5 no.

6 Mr. Laufman. Did you hear the phrase October surprise
7 used around Casey's presence on any other occasion.

8 Mr. Cogan. Well, there was this -- let's see now.
9 This would be -- yeah, this was the fall of 1980. I think
10 there was general talk in the press about the possibility of
11 Jimmy Carter doing an October surprise in the sense of
12 arranging a hostage release. I think there was talk even
13 back then at that time, and that would have an effect on the
14 campaign.

15 Mr. Laufman. I am sorry. My question was, did you
16 ever hear the phrase October surprise used either by Casey
17 or in Casey's presence again.

18 Mr. Cogan. No. No.

19 Mr. Laufman. Can you think of anything else to ask
20 about this?

21 Mr. Shaffer. No, I think you are very thorough.

22 [Discussion off the record.]

23 Mr. Shaffer. Back on the record. I am asking
24 questions of Mr. Rizzo now.

25 Mr. Rizzo, in the 1983-84 time period, is it not