

Arthur B. Darling Interview:

HILLENKOETTER, R. H.

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October 22, 1952
December 2, 1952

Interviews: Hillenkoetter/Darling (2 meetings)

Subject: Hillenkoetter's term as DCI

Makes references to Hillenkoetter's intelligence career; military versus civilian director; opinion of OSS; his concept of CIA--at first, after the National Security Act; individual versus collective responsibility; national estimates; the IAC as viewed by W. Park Armstrong, Admiral Inglis, Secretary Royall, and Hillenkoetter; ICAPS; Scientific Intelligence; Reports and Estimates; OPC; Bogota incident; Dulles Survey; budget and Comptroller; National Security Council; Mc Narney Report; Eberstadt Report.

See folder "CIA: Hillenkoetter/Darling Interviews
cc in folder "IAC"

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R. H. Hillenkoetter

First Interview

X/48

He went through the list of eighteen topics and expressed genuine interest in giving me all that he could remember with regard to them. This would take a good deal of time and so he planned to write out his recollections and send them to me. He asked also if I might be able to return later to go into some of the problems more thoroughly when he had been able to organize his materials. I gathered from talking with him cursorily that he has very distinct memories. He expressed complete willingness to say just what he thought.

Topics 1 & 2. He began his work in intelligence as far back as 1933 in Moscow with Ambassador Bullitt. He served as a courier to the State Department under cover as a naval officer. He was also in Paris with Bullitt, leaving there for Vichy as the Germans poured into France. It was there in approximately 1938-41 that he worked with Leahy. He was Naval Attache. Practically all that he did, he said, was to gather intelligence. It was at this point that I told him what Leahy said about him, that he was a good intelligence agent, "He never got caught." Hillenkoetter was amused and pleased. That, he replied, is the first qualification for a good collector. At about this time I read the section from the draft stating that collection is very different from administering an office and dealing with intelligence officers without antagonizing them, officers who are no longer independent but still think that they are. Hillenkoetter fully appreciated the inference

Document No. and remarked that some of them were always saying that they represented
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intelligence" for the Navy during the war in the Pacific. Then he had an active command and then he went back to Paris where he was when appointed to the post of DCI. He did not say to me but he has said elsewhere that he did not seek the office. This career in intelligence gave more point in my thinking to Leahy's remark that Hillenkoetter did so well in intelligence for State that the Navy had to call him back for training with ships. In this connection, my thought was that Leahy and others who picked Hillenkoetter did so because of his experience in collection without adequate consideration of his administrative experience.

3. Hillenkoetter will write at length on this matter. But he said in passing that he considered it as a career. It is his conviction that the nation must have central intelligence.

4. We did not talk about this topic.

5. Truman said again and again to Hillenkoetter that he considered CIG his own personal service. I asked Hillenkoetter if he had access to the President and he replied that he did anytime that he wished. "Do you mean that you could call up and have an appointment at anytime?" and he said: "yes, within reason." I asked how often he saw Truman. He replied: "once and twice a week." But it was the third question which interested him. He did consider that it was an "embryonic agency." He will write at length on the topic.

6. He will tell me more about this later.

7. He smiled when he saw this topic and remarked that he fully understood what I was after.

[REDACTED]

8. He did not recall Armstrong's letter. I turned to the text and explained what the three sub-points meant and then Hillenkoetter understood. He will write about the episode.

9. He did not remember specifically Royall's memorandum but as he thought it over he recalled the gist of it. His recollection took him to the Forrestal episode. Hillenkoetter did not know just what day it was but said that he remembered vividly the occasion; it was he who "briefed" the Secretary of Defense. Hillenkoetter attended the meeting in Forrestal's office. He heard the Secretary's remarks to Chamberlin and Inglis, chiefs of intelligence. Hillenkoetter will endeavor to recall just what it was that Forrestal said. This will tie in with Houston's and Pforzheimer's recollections. I think that at the time Hillenkoetter may have told Houston. This kind of evidence is hard to handle because none of the parties, however vividly they may recall a scene, can be entirely accurate in direct quotations.

10. Oh, yes, he remembered ICAPS. He did not care much for the arrangement. I told him Vandenberg's story. He will carry on from there to show why he endeavored to use a standing committee representing the IAC. I asked him if the IAC met often. He replied that it met about once a month. I said that we could not find minutes such as had been recorded by the IAB. He said: no, they probably were not as well kept, for the meetings were informal. But they did meet frequently.

11. He will write at some length on scientific intelligence as he recalls the problem.

12, 13, 14. We did not discuss these topics.

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15. I moved in reverse from OPC to Donovan's Principles. I asked him to give me his views with regard to tangling guerrilla operations with collection of secret intelligence. Apparently he is well aware of what is happening at the present moment.

16. Here I talked at some length on CIG 18 and the resulting 7th directive of NIA (January 2, 1947) to argue that it was too loosely drawn for proper control or "coordination" - because the "senior U. S. representative" in each area was made responsible and there was no centralized supervision. This, I suggested, as continued in NSCID 2, created a weakness which contributed to the difficulties at Bogota. Hillenkoetter agreed that I should write about the subject in this way. But, he said, he himself made a mistake at the time. He had the information that Secretary Marshall would run into trouble. Hillenkoetter was going, as he put it, to go right over and tell Lovett. But "they" discussed it in the Agency for two or three hours. He was "talked out" of telling Lovett. It was a mistake, he said; he should have ignored the directive. He should have sent the information. He will write further on this topic.

17 & 18. We merely noted them as my time was gone. He urged that I return so that we might talk at greater length.

Questions which I had in mind to ask and did not reach:

1. What were his views with regard to close cooperation with the British Intelligence Service?
2. What, in the successive years, seemed to be the all-engrossing problem, that is, from year to year?

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3. Why he allowed the 11th directive of NIA (September 11, 1947) to go through without objection. Was it because he felt that the question whether or not he was executive agent was no longer in point as he was about to become DCI under the Act of Congress?

4. Did he confer with Lovett personally before or after Lovett's letter on September 23, 1947?

5. Did he feel that he had won when "NSCID I" went to the Council after his meeting with the chiefs on December 8, 1947?

6. Did he feel defeated when he was not designated specifically as chairman of the IAC in 1947?

7. What were his relations with the press?

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Questions for Admiral Hillenkoetter

October 22, 1952

1. His first interest in intelligence.
2. The work with Leahy at Vichy, and for the State Department.
3. His decision to accept assignment to succeed Vandenberg.
 - Under orders in line of duty?
 - Career as a civilian?
 - Conviction that nation must have Central Intelligence?
4. Study of O.S.S.
 - Before becoming D.C.I.?
 - A model - in any respect, function, office, or procedure?
 - Reaction against it, in others?
5. His view of the Group as he took over.
 - A collective enterprise of the Departments?
 - The President's personal information service?
 - An embryonic "independent agency" temporarily on executive base awaiting organic legislation?
6. His view of the Agency after the National Security Act was in effect.
 - What differences in his mind?
 - His power greater or less than under President's Directive?
7. His view on "Individual v. Collective Responsibility":
 - re - i. Policies of the Agency - Collection, Production, Dissemination.
 - ii. National Estimates - "Coordination" - "Synthesis" at "working-level."
8. Armstrong's suggestion, October 29, 1947, re "Initial Directive" of N.S.C.
 - Definition of National Estimates (Operational" - Inglis)
 - Research and Analysis
 - Use of Director's Right of Inspection - Departmental operations as well as materials

9. Royall's position for the Army - November 26, 1947
- Nature of the new I.A.C.
 - NIA Directive # 1 re "All recommendations" Section 303 - DCI's advisory committee
10. ICAPS - Purpose - Usefulness
- Standing Committee for the Intelligence Advisory Committee.
11. Scientific Intelligence - The Tangle: CIA AEC and the Joint Chiefs RDB
12. The Joint Chiefs and the Agency
- Elimination of civilians from JIC and JIS (JIG)
 - Liaison
 - Representation by CIA for the State Department and the Atomic Energy Commission
13. "O.R.E."
- Research and Evaluation
 - Reports and Estimates
 - Peculiarities of the Problem of National Estimates from his own point of view and experience
14. The Establishment of "OPC" in June 1948
- Propaganda
 - Psychological Warfare
15. Views on Donovan "Principles" including Physical Subversion
16. Bogota.
17. Korea.
18. The Dulles Investigation and Report.