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In Reply, Please Refer to File No.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Washington Field Office Washington, D. C. 20535 June 27, 1978

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (HSCA)

In response to the request of HSCA concerning tapes or verbatim transcripts of interviews of Yuri Nosenko on Rebruary 26-27, 1964; March 3, 4, 6, 1964; and undated information appearing in an August 13, 1970, communication, all of which pertain to Oswald or the assassination of John F. Kennedy, an exhaustive search of the files of the Washington Field Office (WFO) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), was conducted. The results of the search failed to disclose the existence of the tapes or transcripts for the relevant period. The scope of the search, which involved the use of thirty-three Agents and two clerical employees, included all those files pertaining to Nosenko, Kennedy, and Oswald; the Washington Field Tape Library, the Tape Destruction and Retention File of Technical and Microphone Surveillances; the Nosenko Index; as well as the safe of the Special Agent in Charge.

Results of Search

The search did indicate that from February 24, 1964, until April 3, 1964, a series of ten interviews of Nosenko were conducted in English and Russian by Special Agents of the Washington Field Office

There were scattered references in the liles (S.1)(C) reviewed that at least some of the interviews were taped. Specifically, in a memorandum dated March 26, 1964, the writer stated as follows: "During the interview of the (>)

> This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency. It and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

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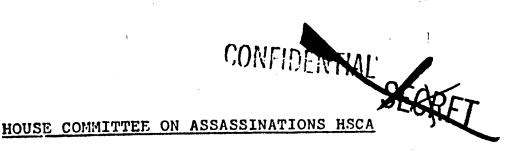
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subject by Bureau Agents on February 24, 25, 26, 27, 1964, tape recordings of the conversations were made. There are a total of ten tapes covering these interviews. It is believed these should be retained for an indefinite period until subject's reliability has been properly established." However, there was no indication that this recommendation was ever acted upon. Further, there were no references in any communication coming out of the interviews that the tapes were either retained, transcribed, translated, or destroyed. It was noted in these communications that extensive notes were taken by the interviewing Agents.

SCOPE AND DISPOSITION OF THE RESULTS OF THE NOSENKO

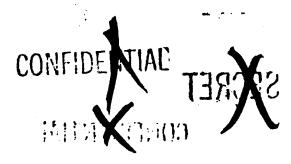
The ten interviews with Nosenko were wide ranging, encompassing many counterintelligence subjects, some of which referred to Oswald's activities. The product of this effort was embodied in a voluminous series of letterhead memoranda which were retained in two volumes of a sub file of Nosenko's main file at Washington Field. With reference to tapes and transcriptions. it was not until October, 1967, CIA took over Nosenko [] when the debriefings, that a clearly defined systematic method was developed to interview, tape, transcribe, and disseminate information. It was not until December, 1968, that Special Agents at Washington Field formerly joined with the CIA in this endeavor, that is, interviews were conducted with representatives of both the Agency and the Bureau present with the objective of establishing Nosenko's reliability. (X) s-1 M

CONCLUSIONS

- 1. Tapes were made of some of the ten FBI interviews of Nosenko from February 24, 1964, to April 3, 1964. 5;
- 2. The tapes were neither retained nor destroyed. Why? Three reasons. One, given the penchant of the FBI to record the disposition of significant material, it would seem inconceivable that the Agents would dispose of items deemed significant without recording either their retention or destruction. The fact that the Agents took "extensive notes" during the interviews has led the reviewers to conclude that the tapes were used as investigative aids to review the







HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ASSISINATIONS HSCA

accuracy of the Agent's notes. Two, there was no compelling legal reason to retain the tapes. They were not recorded surreptiously but with the full knowledge of the interviewee. Eastly, the FBI was not involved, at that point in time, in establishing Nosenko's bona fides, a responsibility of CIA, but rather, the FBI was most definitely interested in extracting the counterintelligence information Nosenko had to offer. The veracity of the information he provided would subsequently be established through investigation and thus was independent of the need to establish the reliability of the source.

In summary, Washington Field's search indicates that tape recordings were made of at least some of the interviews requested by the HSCA; however, there was no evidence that the tapes were either retained, transcribed, or destroyed. The probable reason for not retaining the tapes was that at that time the FBI interviewed Nosenko not to establish his bona fides, but to extract the counterintelligence information he could provide, clues to unresolved espionage cases as well as espionage cases of which the FBI was not previously aware (3) The object was to obtain the information and reduce it to a form for dissemination as quickly as possible so that FBI Agents in the field could begin immediate investigation. Once this was done, the tapes and notes were disposed of as there was no compelling reason to retain either notes or tapes.

The material appearing in the April 13, 1970, communication did not contain any substantial information which was not previously furnished to the Bureau. Further, it was noted that the information pertaining to the Oswald and Kennedy assassination recorded on FD-302s for the dates February 26-27, 1964; March 3, 4, 6, 1964, was compared against information contained in Letterhead Memoranda furnished to the Bureau for the same dates. This information was found to be essentially verbatim.



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TO DIRECTOR (62-117290) PRIORITY

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House select committee on assassinations, U.S. House of #245152 Representatives (HSCA)

RE BUREAU TELETYPE, DATED JUNE 14, 1978.

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IN RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST OF THE HSCA CONCERNING TAPES

FUR VERBATIN THANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS OF YURI NOSENKO ON

FEBRUARY 26-27, 1964; MARCH 3, 4, 6, 1964; AND ON UNDATED

INFORMATION APPEARING IN AN AUGUST 13, 1970, COMMUNICATION,

ALL OF WHICH PERTAIN TO OSWALD OR THE ASSASSINATION OF JOHN

F. KENNEDY, AN EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH OF THE FILES OF THE

WASHINGTON FIELD OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

(FBI), WAS CONDUCTED. THE RESULTEXOFOR HE SEARCH FAILED TO DIS
CLOSE THE EXISTENCE OF THE TAPES RECENTIVES FOR THE RELAVANT

PERIOD. THE SCOPE OF THE SEARCH, WHICH INVOLVED THE USE OF

33 AGENTS AND TWO CLERICAL EMPLOYEES, INCLUDED ALL THOSE FILES

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ALL INFORMATION OF TAINED HERZIN : COLOR CS. F.ED ENCEPT VIRGIS SHOWN PAGE TWO WF 62-NEW U-N C LAS EFTO CLUAL
PERTAINING TO NOSENKO, KENNEDY, AND OSWALD; THE WASHINGTON
FIELD TAPE LIBRARY, THE TAPE DETRUCTION AND RETENTION FILE
OF TESUR AND MISURS; THE NOSENKO INDEX; AS WELL AS THE
SAC'S SAFE.

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RESULTS OF SEARCH.

THE SEARCH DID INDICATE THAT FROM FEBRUARY 24, 1964,
UNTIL APRIL 3, 1964, A SERIES OF TEN INTERVIEWS OF NOSENKO
WERE CONDUCTED IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN BY SA'S OF THE WASHINGTON
FIELD OFFIC.

THERE WERE SCATTERED (5-1)(C)

REFERENCES IN THE FILES REVIEWED THAT AT LEAST SOME OF THE

INTERVIEWS WERE TAPED. SPECIFICALLY, IN A MEMORANDUM, DATED

MARCH 26, 1964, THE WRITER STATED AS FOLLOWS: "DURING THE

INTERVIEW OF THE SUBJECT BY BUREAU AGENTS ON FEBRUARY 24,

25, 26, 27, 1964, TAPE RECORDINGS OF THE CONVERSATIONS WERE

NADE. THERE ARE A TOTAL OF TEN TAPES COVERING THESE INTERVIEWS.

IT IS BELIEVED THESE SHOULD BE RETAINED FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD (\$\frac{4}{3}\$)(4)

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PAGE THREE WF 62- NEW WENT LEADS EFTO

TUNTIL SUBJECT'S RELIABILITY HAS BEEN PROPERLY ESTABLISHED.

HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO INDICATION THAT THIS RECOMMENDATION

WAS EVER ACTED UPON. FURTHER, THERE WERE NO REFERENCES

IN ANY COMMUNICATION COMING OUT OF THE INTERVIEWS THAT THE

TAPES WERE EITHER RETAINED, TRANSCRIBED, TRANSLATED, OR

DESTROYED. IT WAS NOTED IN THESE COMMUNICATIONS THAT

EXTENSIVE NOTES WERE TAKEN BY THE INTERVIEWING AGENTS.

SCOPE AND DISPOSITION OF THE RESULTS OF THE NOSENKO INTERVIEWS.

THE TEN INTERVIEWS WITH NOSENKO WERE WIDE RANGING, ENCOMPASSING ALL THOSE SUBJECTS, INCLUDING OSWALD'S ACTIVITES, WHICH WERE OF COUNTERINTELLIGENCE INTEREST TO THE FBI. THE PRODUCT OF THIS EFFORT WAS EMBODIED IN A VOLUMINOUS SERIES OF LETTERHEAD MEMORANDA WHICH WERE RETAINED IN TWO VOLUMNS OF A SUB FILE OF NOSENKO'S MAIN FILE AT WASHINGTON FIELD. WITH REFERENCE TO TAPES AND TRANSCRIPTIONS, IT WAS NOT UNTIL OCTOBER, 1967, WHEN THE

SYSTEMATIC METHOD WAS DEVELOPED TO INTERVIEW, TAPE, TRANSCRIBE,

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AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION. IT WAS NOT UNTIL DECEMBER, 1968,

THAT SA'S AT WASHINGTON FIELD FORMERLY JOINED WITH THE CIA

IN THIS ENDEAVOR, THAT IS, INTERVIEWS WERE CONDUCTED WITH

REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH THE AGENCY AND THE BUREAU PRESENT

WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF ESTABLISHING NOSENKO'S RELIABILITY.

1. TAPES WERE MADE OF SOME OF THE TEN FBI INTERVIEWS OF NOSENKO FROM FEBRUARY 24, 1964, TO APRIL 3, 1964.

CONCLUSIONS .

THE TAPES WERE NEITHER RETAINED NOR DESTROYED. WHY?

THREE REASONS. ONE. GIVEN THE PENCHANT OF THE FBI TO RECORD

THE DISPOSITION OF SIGNIFICANT MATERIAL, IT WOULD SEEM

INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE AGENTS WOULD DISPOSE OF ITEMS DEEMED

SIGNIFICANT WITHOUT RECORDING EITHER THEIR RETENTION OR

DESTRUCTION. THE FACT THAT THE AGENTS TOOK "EXTENSIVE NOTES"

DURING THE INTERVIEWS HAS LED THE REVIEWERS TO CONCLUDE THAT

THE TAPES WERE USED AS INVESTIGATIVE AIDES TO VIEW THE

VERACITY OF THE AGENTS NOTES. TWO. THERE WAS NO IMPELLING

LEGAL REASON TO RETAIN THE TAPES. THEY WERE NOT RECORDED

SURREPTIOUSLY BUT WITH THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE INTERVIEWEE.

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PAGE FIVE WF 62-NEW UN GLASSEFTO

LASTLY, THE FBI WAS AT THAT POINT IN TIME NOT INVOLVED IN

ESTABLISHING NOSENKO'S BONA FIDES, A RESPONSIBILITY OF CIA,

BUT RATHER, THE FBI WAS MOST DEFINATELY INTERESTED IN EXTRACTING

THE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE INFORMATION NOSENKO HAD TO OFFER.

THE VERACITY OF THE INFORMATION HE PROVIDED WOULD SUBSEQUENTLY

BE ESTABLISHED THROUGH INVESTIGATION AND THUS WAS INDEPENDANT.

OF THE NEED TO ESTABLISH THE RELIABILITY OF THE SOURCE.

IN SUMMARY, WASHINGTON FIELD'S SEARCH INDICATES THAT
TAPE RECORDINGS WERE MADE OF AT LEAST SOME OF THE INTERVIEWS
REQUESTED BY THE HSCA; HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT
THE TAPES WERE EITHER RETAINED, TRANSCRIBED, OR DESTROYED.
THE PROBABLE REASON FOR NOT RETAINING THE TAPES WAS THAT
THE FBI AT THAT TIME INTERVIEWING NOSENKO NOT TO ESTABLISH
HIS BONA FIDES BUT FOR THE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE INFORMATION
HE COULD PROVIDE, CLUES TO UNRESOLVED ESPIONAGE CASES AS
WELL AS ESPIONAGE CASES OF WHICH THE FBI WAS NOT PREVIOUSLY
AWARE AND THE OBJECT WAS TO OBTAIN THE INFORMATION AND REDUCE
1T TO A FORM FOR DISSEMINATION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE SO THAT
FBI AGENTS IN THE FIELD COULD BEGIN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION.

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UNCE THIS WAS DONE, THERE WAS NO COMPELLING REASON TO RETAIN

EITHER NOTES OR TAPES.

THE INFORMATION APPEARING IN THE APRIL 13, 1970, COMMUNICATION DID NOT CONTAIN ANY SUBSTANCIAL INFORMATION WHICH WAS NOT PREVIOUSLY FURNISHED TO THE BUREAU. FURTHER, IT WAS NOTED THAT THE INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE OSWALD AND KENNEDY ASSASSIMATION RECORDED ON FD-302'S FOR THE DATES FEBRUARY 26-27, 1964; MARCH 3, 4, 6, 1964, WAS COMPARED AGAINST INFORMATION CONTAINED IN LETTERHEAD MEMORANDA FURNISHED TO THE BUREAU FOR THE SAME DATES. THIS INFORMATION WAS FOUND TO BE ESSENTIALLY VERBATIM.

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