

May 28, 1968

The attached 4 items from or relating to the ONI file on Oswald (3 letters: Rankin to McNaughton, Department of Defense, 2/18/64; McNaughton to Rankin, undated but about 3/4/64; Rankin to McNaughton, 3/11/64; memo, Stern to Slawson, 3/31/64) indicate that the Defense Department was not overeager to help the Commission, especially on ONI-related matters. The Archives has advised that "the reply of the Department of Defense to J. Lee Rankin's letter of March 11, 1964, and a letter of Mr. Stern to the Office of Naval Intelligence have not been found in relevant files of the Commission." (Clever - they don't even say they are not in the relevant files. There must be lots of irrelevant files lying around.) I find the DOD's rather blatant refusal to tell the Commission that it had all the material on Oswald a bit surprising. If Oswald was working for someone in Russia, ONI seems as likely as CIA.

The cover letter to CD 978 (attached) confirms my interpretation of the DOD's reply, which is CE 1961, as at best evasive. (See memo on Oswald's security clearance, 3/24/68.) Reread part (c) of CE 1961 in conjunction with the cover letter. Although the Commission's request was directed to Lt. Col. Folsom of the Personnel Department (Why not to ONI? Presumably because the Commission realized by then how hard it would be to get information out of that agency), he was asked to "determine" whether Oswald ever had higher than Confidential clearance. Folsom's "reply" consists primarily of information from Oswald's personnel file, about which Folsom had testified on May 1, and which the cover letter of May 19 shows had been studied by the Commission. Folsom added a confusing but essentially empty statement indicating that if Oswald did Secret work he presumably had Secret clearance. Folsom either did not check to see what work Oswald had done, or did not wish to deny Donovan's testimony, noted in Rankin's letter, that Oswald's job in fact required a Secret clearance. I think that we may take this as an admission that Oswald did have at least Secret clearance.

I have a copy of the "list of members, Fair Play for Cuba" which is an attachment to SS 407 (CE 3119). This 14-page list was obtained from the Louisiana State Police (26H770-4), but it is not evident from which agencies or agency - Federal, state, or local police - it originated. The list is dated February 1961, is stamped "Intelligence Unit," and has the handwritten notation "not for publication." The first 5 pages contain 203 names and addresses from all over the country; 8 from Florida are circled; there are none from Louisiana. The next 5 pages include brief descriptions of "some of the activities of individuals in our area (Chicago - P.H.) who visited Cuba in the month of February 1961, and whose names appeared on the list you submitted to us." The "intelligence" on these 35 people includes stuff like "believed to have attended the May Day Rally of the Communist Party in 1950" and "made funeral arrangements for her husband ... funeral announcements in the newspaper asked that flowers be omitted, but that memorials could be made to the Suburban Youth Council" of the NAACP. The last page is dated 10/3/61 and relates to knowledge by "this Division" (?) of certain individuals in the Boulder, Colorado area.

CD 365 is material sent to the Commission by the State of Louisiana; pages 1-35 are CE 1413. The Archives has advised that the remaining 6 pages are unclassified. I have no idea what this material is, but it might be interesting.

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