

~~SECRET~~

We Discover Lee OSWALD in Mexico City

CIA did produce one very significant piece of information on Lee OSWALD before he shot President Kennedy. On 1 October 1963, [our Mexico City Station intercepted] a telephone call Lee OSWALD made from someplace in Mexico City to the Soviet Embassy there, using his own name. Speaking broken Russian and using his true name, OSWALD was talking to the Embassy guard, OBYEDKOV, who often answers the phone. OSWALD said he had visited the Embassy the previous Saturday (28 September 1963) and spoken to a consul whose name he had forgotten; and who had promised to send a telegram for him to Washington. He wanted to know if there were "anything new." The guard said if the consul was dark it was (Valeriy Vladimirovich) KOSTIKOV. The guard checked with someone else and said that the message had gone out but no answer had been received. He then hung up.

This piece of information was produced from [

] It

~~SECRET~~

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED
1995

likelihood that the Lee OSWALD mentioned was probably the former defector. A copy of this same cable was delivered by hand to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, with which we have no cable link. The same day a long cable went out to Mexico City informing our Station of the background of defector Lee OSWALD and asking for more information. Our Station was instructed to pass its information on the phone call to the Mexico City offices of the FBI, the Embassy, the Naval Attache, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This was done.

In its original report of 9 October, Mexico City had said it had a photograph of an apparent American male leaving the Soviet Embassy on 1 October 1963, the day OSWALD phone there. [A very sensitive operation in Mexico City provides us with secretly taken photographs of many but not all visitors to the Soviet Embassy there, taken with telephoto lenses.] Accordingly, we cabled the Navy Department on 24 October 1963 asking for a photograph of Lee OSWALD from his Marine Corps days so we could compare photos. We had not received this photograph by 22 November 1963, but in any event, it turned out that the man photographed outside the Soviet

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Embassy was not OSWALD anyway. As chance would have it, none of our

[several photo observation points] in Mexico City had ever taken an identifiable picture of Lee OSWALD.

Our Mexico City Station very often produces information like this on US citizens contacting Soviet bloc embassies in Mexico City. Frequently the information we get is extremely incriminating, and on one or two occasions we have even been able to apprehend and return to the USA American military personnel who are attempting to defect. In all such cases, our Headquarters desk requests and obtains the special permission of the Deputy Director for Plans to pass the derogatory information on a US citizen to other government agencies. Derogatory information on Americans is not treated routinely; in each case the DDP or his Assistant personally scrutinize the information, make sure it is credible, and decide whether and to whom it will be passed. Only in absolute emergencies is the Mexico City Station authorized to pass such information directly to the FBI office in the U.S. Embassy.

At this writing (13 December 1963) we do not know what action the FBI

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

and other agencies may have taken based on our report. We surmise that the FBI may have made local checks through Mexican authorities to see if Lee OSWALD was actually in Mexico City on 1 October. Indeed, later investigation has confirmed all the details of his trip, where he stayed, and what he did. To avoid crossing lines with the FBI, our Mexico Station undertook no local investigation of its own. As we now know, OSWALD left Mexico on 3 October and was no longer there when our report was put out.

L

22 November 1963

When word of the shooting of President Kennedy reached the offices of our operating divisions and staffs on the afternoon of Friday 22 November 1963, transistor radios were turned on everywhere to follow the tragedy. When the name of Lee OSWALD was heard, the effect was electric. A phone message from the FBI came at about the same time, naming OSWALD

~~SECRET~~