

These notes cover a small number of CIA items which struck me as particularly interesting during my initial review of the roughly 1500 pages. As indicated by the detailed subject guide, many additional items have important information about the assassination, its investigation, and CIA procedures.

Item 1, cable of October 9, 1963 (1 page)

This appears to be the original telegram from Mexico to CIA HQ, reporting on Oswald's visit of October 1 to the Soviet Embassy, and on the photo of the man who was not Oswald. (The remaining 23 pages of item 1 as described in the CIA list appear to be a post-assassination transcript of Oswald's diary which was just put at the bottom of the file and associated with this telegram by mistake.)

The CIA has released a number of documents relating to the mystery man question. I have not yet taken the time to collate them all with the information in my detailed chronology; that would be necessary before coming to a firm conclusion as to what the new material really means.

My present impression is that the new material does not clear up the question of who in the CIA made the 'mistaken' identification, or why. Item 1 is generally consistent with the Belin-Slawson position that the information about the Oswald contact and the photo came up to HQ as separate bits of information, and were mistakenly put together. However, the detailed structure of item 1 does not really strengthen that version. Unfortunately, the key parts are deleted, but one gets the very strong impression that the 2 items were meant by Mexico City to be related. (That is, it is not as if the entire daily take of the taps and photos was sent up.) We can't really tell what Mexico intended without knowing how such information was usually reported. Also, we really need to know how thorough the photographic coverage was; that is, how reasonable it was to assume that the only American photographed that day (if that was the case) had to be Oswald.

In any case, someone should revise the detailed chronology to take into account the new documents. There is a lot of new information. (See also discussion of items 149, 250, 258, 337, and 485 below.)

Item 149, undated memo entitled "Summary of relevant information on Lee Harvey Oswald at 0700 on 24 November 1963" (4 pages)

This is a key item because, like quite a few others just released, it shows CIA deviousness about the Mexico information.

As far as I can tell, this memo could have been written at 0700 on 11/24/63.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 are devious to the point of falsity. The pre-assassination paragraph makes no mention of the photo or the erroneous description in the 10/10 telegram, which must of course have been readily apparent. On the contrary, paragraph 2 says that after the assassination the Mexico Station "began researching" its files and "turned up" photos of a man believed to be Oswald, which of course turned out to be someone else. This is true, to the degree that Mexico found more photos after the assassination, but horribly deceptive. This adds the information that no photos of Oswald at either Embassy had yet been found (but offers no explanation.)

This memo suggests that this problem was a matter of immediate concern and a subject of some discussion. Paragraph 1 states that "Since our Agency is not supposed to investigate U.S. citizens abroad without special request, we did nothing further on the case." Of course, that is rather implausible, but who was saying that? What about the request for a photo of Oswald, which is not mentioned in this memo (i.e., in the available part)? To say nothing of the fact that the CIA had a press photo of Oswald which was predictably more recent than his Navy photo! Something funny was going on, and it looks as if the CIA was covering for it - internally - within a couple of days.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 appear to refer to the information from bugs which relates to other Oswald visits. This should also be merged with my old chronology. Large chunks of this memo are still withheld.

It should be noted that the CIA's summary for the Rockefeller Commission

was similarly deceptive. On April 15, 1975, Belin wrote the CIA, asking for an explanation of this and other matters. An interim report was done on April 22, and Belin was briefed on that date (despite the earlier agreement, apparently prompted by my complaint to Shannon about Belin's pro-WC bias, that Olsen would be in charge of this area; see item 448). In this 4/22 memo (item 449), the CIA said that "The Agency at no time in its dealings/with the FBI in the field or with the Warren Commission in Headquarters decried or suggested that the unknown individual whose photograph was taken (deletion, consistent with "in Mexico City") on 1 October was Lee Harvey Oswald." Emphasis added, of course. The reference to the FBI "in the field" sidesteps the 10/10 telegram. The next paragraph, which probably refers to that message, is deleted in full. The next section says that Rankin was told "very clearly that the photograph ... had nothing to do with the Oswald case... (and) we find no reason to modify this judgement." That is true only with a very narrow definition of the Oswald case. The memo also says that their problems with the photo arose from Mrs. Oswald's misidentification of it, which is an odd way of looking at the situation. Additional CIA reports to the Rocky Commission on this are presumably still withheld.

I have no idea whether the Schweiker Subcommittee has had any occasion to get into this. Judging from the CIA's lack of candor with the Warren and Rockefeller Commissions, and the Church Committee's considerable reliance on CIA information, it is not too likely that they will get to the bottom of this. (Of course, since the CIA seems quite willing to let the Church Committee nail Helms on any number of things, they may come clean on this too.)

Item 154, December 11, 1963, internal CIA memo (I think), "Additional Notes and Comments on the Oswald Case"

This memo was prompted by the NY Times report of 12/10 on CD 1, the FBI's summary report, which concluded that there was no evidence that Oswald was the agent of a foreign government. The author noted that "These disclosures presumably eliminate the possibility of further confrontations (my emphasis) with Mr. (long deletion - consistent with "(name) of the FBI"). In the event that (deletion, consistent with "Mr. -----") continues to insist that the President was murdered by the Soviet secret police, the following additional negative indications and observations may be of some value." The rest of the memo is a rather good discussion of the weaknesses in the KGB hypothesis - points which I trust have been brought to the attention of the Church Committee, if they are working on this possibility. (Some loose ends are discussed also.)

I don't know who Mr. X was, but there clearly was something very heavy going on. Refer to my memo on CD 1084a (just released), where the FBI (in its original summary report) ties Oswald quite directly to Castro. (CD 1, as finally written, reports the same facts but plays down the strength of Oswald's FPCC activities and the FPCC-Castro link.) It also appears that Ambassador Mann in Mexico was really pushing the foreign-conspiracy hypothesis. I don't think we can piece this all together yet, but the context of LBJ's expressed fears is becoming clearer. (See also item 274, below.)

By the way, I think it was this leak of CD 1 that Katzenbach talked about at an early WC executive session, saying he thought it must have come from the FBI. Item 135 indicates that CIA, State, and Treasury reviewed CD 1 on December 6. Although the NYT report probably came from the FBI, this item suggests that others had an interest in getting the FBI no-conspiracy conclusion firmed up. Again, there may have been more going on than we suspected.

Item 250, March 5, 1964, internal CIA memo on response to Rankin's letter of Feb. 12, re Mexico and other matters. One page.

Refer to my Mexico chronology for the context of this memo. On Feb. 12, Rankin asked for the pre-assassination file, and for the material which had been given to the SS right after the assassination. It is quite clear that at this time the WC didn't know that the mystery "Mrs. Oswald" photo was connected with the

Mexico trip. Item 250 appears to be an internal transmittal memo for the letter of March 6, which submitted the file (CD 692), with the sensitive Mexico stuff improperly replaced by a summary memo. (Naughty!) The rest of the request was not covered until March 24 (CD 674), at which date the original 10/10 telegram was also sent (CD 631). (This is confusing--see the chronology.) In summary, I have had for some time strong evidence that the CIA was stonewalling the Commission regarding the photo and the telegram. In item 250, we have evidence of this in the CIA's own words. "We have a problem here for your determination," the unknown author wrote to the unknown recipient. "(Staff officer) does not desire to respond directly to paragraph 2 of that letter (of 2/12) which made a levy for our material which had gotten into the hands of the Secret Service since 23 November.... Unless you feel otherwise, (Staff Officer) would prefer to wait out the Commission on the matter covered by paragraph 2." The memo then refers to "the famous six photographs which were not of Oswald" as an "aborted lead," which is quite an understatement. ("Staff Officer" is written in for a deletion of 3 characters, which is of course consistent with "DDP," i.e. Helms.) "If you desire to take note of the levy in paragraph 2, we would recommend that you indicate in the attached proposed memorandum solely that we will take care of it separately," the memo concludes. In fact, the cover letter to CD 692 does not even do that.

My chronology discusses the meeting of 3/12, at which the CIA allowed the WC to go on thinking that the photo and the Mexico trip were unrelated. Item 256 is the CIA's memo on this meeting (which should be correlated with the WC's). The relevant sections (if any) are still withheld.

This new material may not clear up the questions about the origin and pre-assassination handling of the photo, but clearer evidence of a post-assassination coverup would be hard to imagine.

Item 258, CIA memo of 3/24/64 to Rankin, re the 10/10 telegram (4 pp.)

This is the very important CD 631, which was released (to much amazement among the critics) in 1973, and which is covered in detail in my chronology. What is of interest here are the deletions which were not made in 1973 but are made now. (It would be particularly important if the Church and Rockefeller Committees got the version with deletions!)

On the first page of the cover memo, the message numbers are deleted - no big deal. The second page - which consists of a statement that "very sensitive sources and methods" are involved, and Helms' signature, is withheld in full now! In the telegram itself, the underlined words are now deleted: "On 1 October 1963 a reliable and sensitive source in Mexico reported...." What's all this then?

This item illustrates the kind of previously available information that is deleted at many points in the new material. Hardly a sign that the CIA wants the facts to come out as much as possible.

Item 274, CIA internal memo of April 14, 1964, re visit of Coleman, Slawson, and Willens to Mexico. (4 pages)

This item is generally interesting, as are several others relating to this visit, and quite a few others on WC-CIA liaison in general. (See subject guide.) I suspect that the CIA snowed the WC on this visit by telling them something about the photographic surveillance operation, and maybe by playing tapes of Oswald. A lot of this memo is still withheld, so we don't really know what they talked about. (We do have the WC's followup letter to the FBI, which asked (among other things) for the "dossier" on Oswald which was used to brief Ambassador Mann, CD 1084a.)

What particularly interested me in this memo was item 10: "They (the WC people) said that (deletion, "A State Dept. official" written in) still has the "feeling in his guts" that Castro hired Oswald to kill Kennedy; they said, however, that the Commission has not been able to get any proof of this." Would this be Mann? Heavy stuff.

From item 12, "It is believed that all three of these visitors were pleased with (our) work on the Oswald case." Other items indicate similar expressions of satisfaction. I'm sure the CIA did look much better than the FBI or SS, but I suspect that the WC was fairly easy for a bunch of professionals to fool.

Item 309, May 25, 1964 memo for DDP re Sauvage book, 1 page.

This memo simply quotes a note in Publisher's Weekly that "The Oswald Affair," an expanded version of Sauvage's March '64 Commentary article, is scheduled for publication in August by Random House.

There is absolutely nothing in this memo to suggest that the CIA had in mind doing anything about this book. (Of course, if they did, they wouldn't be telling us about it.) We have a number of memos taking note of publications relating to the assassination. (I don't offhand recall others relating to U.S. publications in this period, but maybe the fact that Sauvage worked for Figaro put this within the CIA's jurisdiction.) Although it might seem odd that such a memo was prepared for the DDP (i.e., Helms), it was Plans who handled liaison with the Warren Commission, so that is logical enough.

It is probably not relevant that, according to the Church Committee report, E. Howard Hunt had a position of major responsibility with regard to the media in the late 1960's.

Sauvage's book was not published as scheduled. It appeared in French in March 1965, and in English in 1966 (published by World). In his American postscript (p. 399-400), Sauvage explains how he signed a contract (evidently with Random House) in March 1964, and how upon publication of the Warren Report "the enthusiasm of my New York publisher ebbed perceptibly." He quotes at length from a silly letter from an unnamed person at the publisher's, who said that despite the flaws in the WR "any book which attempts to question Oswald's guilt would be out of touch with reality and could not be taken seriously by responsible critics."

In Random House's defense, it should be noted that the book was apparently delayed past the original August publication date, and that any book appearing after the WR would have real problems if it did not take the Report into account. As published in March, the book did include much analysis of the Report, and thus was presumably quite different from the original concept. Sauvage claimed to bear no grudge against the author of that letter for having "'reluctantly' released (him) from the contract." Nonetheless, the timely publication of Sauvage's book would have represented a commitment by a major publishing house to serious criticism of the WR, and might at least have smoothed the way for the wave of books in 1966.

Item 310, memo of 5/27/64 from Helms to Rankin, 3 pp.

This is CD 990, "Discussion between Chairman Khrushchev and Mr. Drew Pearson re Lee Harvey Oswald," originally classified Secret. The deletions in item 310 include the names of Pearson and Helms, and the classification, and several large sections. See items 414 and 420 (below) for CIA concern about the release of the CD list.

We have known for years that there was a Pearson-Khrushchev conversation, but the CIA still releases this with deletions! Again, the question is whether the Church Committee got an unsanitized version.

This item was the subject of an AP story on March 24, 1975, by David Martin (who had discussed it with me). The substance (that K. didn't believe Oswald did it alone) is less interesting than the CIA's use of Pearson, which does not seem to have been improper. The AP said that Pearson gave a report to the CIA in Cairo; item 310 gives the impression that the report was oral and that Mrs. Pearson also spoke with the CIA.

Item 319, memo of 6/19/64, re information from a Cuban defector, 7 pp.

Items 290, 294-5, and 298 also relate to this. Item 294 is CD 935, which has always been of interest because it was one of only 4 CD's to have been classified Top Secret. There are major deletions in this material.

As I understand it, in summary, the source (who had contact with the Cuban DGI) reported that Oswald was in contact with that intelligence service, which took extraordinary steps after the assassination, but after reinterview the CIA concluded that the source "had no personal knowledge of Oswald and no information linking him

to the Cuban intelligence services in any manner."

As is clear from my subject guide, there were a number of reports tying Oswald with the Cuban government; this is just the most striking. It was mentioned in an AP story on 3/22/76.

One of the source's answers is still deleted. The question was #11, about a person (name deleted) who entered Mexico on 11/23 and went to Havana by special plane on 11/27. We have other documents relating to this person.

Item 298 is a rather peculiar memo which appears to relate in part to this. Someone thought that certain "recent information ... which originated with the (deleted) source" should "not go to the Commission prior to the Director's appearance unless we have first had some preliminary reaction or made sure that the Director is fully aware of its implications since it could well serve as the basis for detailed questioning." This memo also indicates that the expected general questions about the existence of a conspiracy "certainly necessitates that the DCI be made aware of the positions taken during previous interviews." This memo is written so elliptically that there may be much more than meets the eye.

Item 337, letter of 7/23/64 from Helms to Rankin, re the mystery photo, 1 p. Mexico again. This is the cover letter to CD 1287, which was released in full in 1975 (as a result of my request, I believe). It is now being re-released, with a number of deletions: Helms' name, two references to the sensitivity of the source (one of which is followed by Helms' statement that he has therefore "refrained from adding further details"), and one of the reasons that the photo should not be published: "because it would jeopardize a most confidential and productive operation." (The other cited reason was that "it could be embarrassing to the individual involved who as far as this Agency is aware, had no connection with LHO or the assassination." One would think that if he were embarrassed enough to complain, the CIA would be delighted to find out who he was!)

Item 350, CIA memo of 8/24/64, re conversation with Slawson, 1 page.

I picked this out as a key item to remind myself that there are a number of items which shed light on the CIA's relationship with the Warren Commission. (See the subject guide.) This memo merely notes that Slawson said he was going to send over "an advance copy of a draft of the portion of the Commission's Report on the foreign conspiratorial angle," including "a precise indication of what attachments and quotations were going to be used. This would be for our reading and approval." This sounds fairly routine, although I was not aware that the CIA had reviewed this draft. I suspect that the author of the memo made a point of noting that the CIA had the opportunity to "approve" this material for the purpose of making the WC look dependent on the CIA. It should be kept in mind that many of the CIA memos, especially those which have been released, may have been written for self-serving purposes. (There really seems to be no reason to put this sort of thing in a memo.) Incidentally, several of the CIA items note that WC staff people expressed satisfaction with the CIA's work.

Item 399, McCone to Katzenbach, 2/24/65, re withholding, 2 pp.

McCone, responding to a letter from Katzenbach, goes on about how the CIA had cooperated fully with the WC, and worked with the staff to make sure that nothing was published which should have been withheld. There is a false claim that "very few items of CIA correspondence were withheld from the public domain" and that "in no instance did they have a direct bearing on the assassination." Horsefeathers. Then McCone asked that these documents "not be excepted from the normal 75-year disclosure period."

We know, of course, that the Guidelines and the 5-year review policy eventually were made to govern the withholding. I believe this is the only document I have which actually mentions the infamous 75-year withholding. This item is interesting in light of the CIA's later representations in favor of maximum possible disclosure, and their actual release of much of the material in question (which certainly should not have been locked up for 75 years!).

Item 414, 3 CIA memos of July 7, 10, '67 (1+4 pages), re "Garrison-inspired publicity regarding classified CIA information in Warren Commission files."

The CIA got quite upset at the Archives' release of the CD list, and successfully prevented similar release of the incoming mail log. The immediate flap was prompted by an article by Tom Bethell in the States-Item, quoting the titles of many withheld CD's. See also item 420, below, and other material in the subject guide under C7, publication of documents and leaks.

This item is worth reading in full, just to get the tone. I would really like to know who wrote the covering memo, since he repeats the claim that the WC "was apprised of every detail" regarding the 10/10/63 CIA telegram. By 1967 that seems to have become the party line at the CIA.

The CIA seems to have really leaned on the Archives about this. Incidentally, the Archives told the CIA that Bethell was reviewing documents from 1/20 to 6/12/67. I'm sure the Agency could have found out exactly what he saw, if they wanted to; or, for that matter, just what I and others had ordered by mail.

Item 416, internal CIA memo of August 2, 1967, 2 pages.

The immediate subject of this memo is some not-particularly-convincing allegations made to the FBI by some "assassination buffs" in Kalamazoo. The CIA wasn't taking these allegations too seriously, but did check a report that Oswald had met in Mexico with a CIA agent named Bill Medina. Also, the CIA noted an FBI report that Bringuier had heard that Garrison would talk about an alleged ex-Nazi who was a big CIA wheel in Mexico.

The importance of this item is that it confirms that the CIA and the FBI were in fact compiling reports on the JFK case, and apparently following the Garrison case rather closely. That is perfectly normal; however, this may only be the tip of the ice cube. As I discussed in my memo on the CIA and the WC, I would really like to see the CIA's post-WC investigation of the assassination.

Incidentally, Russell's Village Voice article mentions two CIA items about the Garrison investigation (specifically, admitted links between Shaw and the Domestic Contact Service) which were not in the material released to me. Either they were released later, or they were given to Bud by accident!

Item 418, CIA memo to FBI, June 14, 1967, 2 pages.

Another memo of the Garrison period, responding to unspecified allegations of an unidentified woman. The memo refers to at least 5 FBI reports relating to key Garrison figures: Sergio Arcacha Smith and Manuel Garcia Gonzalez. One FBI report "quotes (deletion, presumably Dean Andrews) as saying that MGG does not exist and that he (deletion ?!) invented this name. This Agency has no other record of Manuel Garcia Gonzalez.

This CIA memo also says that "A check of our file holdings has disclosed no association between him (Arcacha) and this Agency." He was quite a big name in the CRC - so does anyone believe this?

I would like to see all the FBI reports on the Garrison investigation!

Item 420, internal CIA memo of Sept. 15, 1967 on WC material in the Archives, 2 pp.

(Cf. #414, supra.) Since 12 copies of the CD list had gone out, the Archives didn't feel that it was possible to stop sending out the unexpurgated version. The CIA reluctantly goes along. Some of the people who have copies are listed, with the names deleted; one is clearly Penn Jones. "(Deletion) who has been associated with Ramparts" could be Lifton or me, since I had a microfilm copy of the list made for Ramparts and got my copy from them.

Item 433, CIA memo of 10/1/64 to Rankin, re Joachim Joesten, 2 pp.

This is CD 1532; the CIA sent over old Gestapo documents on Joesten, with a straight face. (This was after the WR was published.) The Archives has released the documents themselves, 11 pp., and an uncensored version of the cover letter (which indicates that it came from Helms, and that copies were sent to the FBI, State, and INS - interesting!) These documents have been withheld for over 11 years,

despite the fact that Joesten's CP membership number was leaked to a Congressman who put it in the Congressional Record, after which I made a formal request for this CD.

Item 448, CIA internal memo of 4/15/75, 1 page, re my memo on the CIA and the Warren Commission.

Edgar Shannon of the Rockefeller Commission apparently took my memo rather seriously, and seems to have given it to the CIA for a reply. (Some investigation!) I told Shannon that Belin shouldn't be in charge of this area of the investigation, and it was agreed that Olsen would be. (Nonetheless, Belin remained active in this area, as indicated by later CIA items.)

My memo, and my complaint about the RC's failure to contact me about it or respond to the substance in its report, are in our anthology, pp. 460 and 521. There is actually some good stuff in it, if I do say so myself.

It is clear from the last paragraph of this memo that the RC was totally dependent on the CIA for their 'investigation' of the JFK case. It is also clear from the other RC correspondence (even the fraction which has been released) that attention was given to matters of much more import than Hunt and Sturgis on the grassy knoll. In light of what might be going on with the Church Committee, this part of the CIA file may turn out to be the most significant.

I now have two versions of this one-page item. As it was originally released, my name was deleted, as were those of Olsen and Belin (but not Shannon). For Olsen and Belin, "Agency Official" was written in by hand! This was obviously a clerical error, whether or not they were CIA, and anyhow Belin is not smart enough to be a CIA official. After a few phone calls and letters, the CIA has denied that the two were agents, Belin denied it to a reporter I talked with, and the CIA has released the unsanitized document. The odd thing about the CIA's explanation to me is that the 'error' apparently was made when the document was sanitized for the RC, Church Committee, or Pike Committee. I think what they told me was, in effect, that the general public doesn't get anything written in when something is deleted, but the official investigations do. I wouldn't rule out the possibility that the 'error' was intended to confuse the Church Committee, embarrass Belin, or embarrass me by getting me to jump at the bait and say silly things about the turkey from Des Moines. I still have no idea why the CIA sent me a copy of Belin's 1971 NYT article when it appeared, with words of praise for it; in the context of a FOIA correspondence, that was a rather odd thing to do.

By the way, has everyone heard the story of Belin's attempt to get Sylvia's Texas Observer piece on Givens removed from the anthology? (He did get one sentence deleted, on the advice of Random House's counsel.)

Item 450, CIA memo of 14 May 1975 to Olsen (RC), 9 pp., re NPIC analysis of the Zapruder film.

Procedurally, this interests me because it shows that the CIA made a detailed substantive response to my memo. Page 2 refers to information on this matter previously forwarded "in connection with our comments on the Hoch memorandum." My memo had made only a passing reference to the CIA's apparent use of the Zapruder film (p. 482). I have asked for the full CIA response, but have not gotten any of it yet.

This item is also of substantive interest, although I don't quite understand what it is all about. The covering material refers to information provided by the CIA to the Secret Service after the NPIC analysis of the Zapruder film. The 5 pages of notes provided suggest, to me, a very early attempt to pick out the 3 shots, using as one input the Life statement about the timing. This is quite odd, since the NPIC people were presumably as professional as anyone and capable of a real study, at least as good as anything anyone else (including Itek) has yet come up with. Presumably the still unreleased material could clear some of this up.

Item 451, CIA memo to Belin, May 30, 1975, re allegations of Castro involvement, cover letter (1 p.) plus memo (27 pp); item 452 (2 pp.) is an internal covering memo.

This is very important, particularly in light of attempts that may be going on to revive the Castro-did-it hypothesis with the Schweiker Committee. In essence, this memo says that there is no new evidence (so the WC was okay); more evidence could exist in Moscow or Havana; the WR should have left a wider window for this contingency; Castro's public warning against JFK on Sept. 7, 1963 "must be considered of great significance in the light of the pathological evolution of Oswald's passive/aggressive makeup"; Oswald may have been in touch with Cuban intelligence when he was in the Marines in California.

Such a hypothesis quickly runs into problems as to how Castro and his friends on the Dallas police (or, for that matter, his friends at Bethesda or in the FBI) might have pulled off the assassination. Other CIA items show how seriously such hypotheses were examined from the start. What we are probably seeing is the public emergence of the insiders' cover story - that the investigation had to be limited because of the threat to world peace if the Castro link came out. I do not think it is any coincidence that Ford, Belin, and CBS came to consistent positions in the fall of 1975. I would be surprised if the CIA is not reviving this sort of thing for Schweiker, less than a year after giving it to the Rockefeller Commission. If they can come up with some new evidence - e.g., a confession by Marina that she was a KGB agent, or an admission by Nosenko that he was a plant - the Schweiker Subcommittee might be tempted to use it and forget about all the other essential questions - e.g., the doubts about Oswald's guilt, the FBI-CIA-WC coverup, etc. We will see.

It is, therefore, worth reviewing the immediate context of this memo. On April 15 (the same day as item 448, indicating that Belin would defer to Olsen to head the investigation), Belin wrote a letter (which we don't have) to the CIA. In part, it asked for a report on the photo of the mystery man (see item 449); paragraph 3 referred to Castro's 1963 speech and apparently asked for a report on allegations of Castro involvement. Subsequently Belin had a "number of conversation with (deleted) on this and related matters." (Item 451, p. 1) On May 23, the memo was passed upwards in the CIA. (Item 452) On May 30, it was sent to Belin, with a disclaimer (unique, I think) in the cover letter noting that "the attached review represents the research and analysis of an individual officer. It has not been fully researched and verified and does not necessarily represent the position of this Agency."

Belin identified the author to the press as Rocca. We know that Rocca was interviewed by the Church Committee on other matters in November 1975; he may have been a source on the JFK case too. (It seems likely that if the Schweiker Subcommittee were spending its time interviewing hostile non-governmental witnesses, that would have leaked out by now.)

In addition to the above general comments, there are specific problems with the Rocca memo. Since quite a few pages are withheld in full, it is difficult to evaluate it, but the summary/introduction is intact, so the withheld stuff is presumably not essential.

The most glaring specific problem is Rocca's characterization of Castro's warning as "an act of singular irresponsibility and under no circumstances (was) excusable as retorsion (sic) for what the Cuban emigres were doing during the summer of 1963." (P. 7) What Castro had said was "U.S. leaders should think that if they are aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be safe." The question, of course, was not what the emigres were doing but what the government was doing. Whether or not Rocca knew it - or the person who added the disclaimer to the cover letter knew it - we now know that even on November 22, 1963 the CIA was taking steps to kill Castro. This evasiveness and misrepresentation by the CIA is particularly striking since it came in a letter to a Commission which ducked the whole issue of CIA assassination plots.

It is important to the Rocca thesis (which might be the Rocca-Belin thesis, since the memo's reference to Tippit on page 5 suggests that Rocca had picked up

some of Belin's world view) that the Warren Commission didn't pay enough attention to Castro's threat. Rocca says that "there is no evidence in the Agency records" that the WC staff pursued the implications of that report. (Emphasis added.) In fact, the N.O. Times-Picayune article in question is published as CE 1348; I have a memo by Liebeler arguing that it should be mentioned in the WR. He was evidently overruled on the grounds that there was no evidence that Oswald had seen the story. (I pointed this out to David Martin of the AP, who wrote a second story on this item (the first was on 3/21), discussing the Warren Commission's consideration of the matter; the version of the followup article which I saw did not, however, point out that Rocca's memo was substantively misleading.)

The next factual section of Rocca's memo is a strained interpretation of Nelson Delgado's testimony about Oswald's correspondence with the Cuban Consulate in L.A. and a visit he received from an unknown civilian. Rocca accepts Delgado's alleged presumption that the visitor was from the Cuban consulate. (In fact, Delgado had merely responded affirmatively when Liebeler asked him if he connected this visit with the Cuban Consulate, which is hardly the same thing.) It seems more likely to me that Oswald's correspondence would have brought him to the attention of American intelligence that that a Cuban would have come to see him at the Marine base for any significant reason. With this assumption, Rocca pursued the matter for two more paragraphs, which are withheld.

The rest of the memo appears to deal with various important allegations of Cuban involvement, including "D". Large parts are withheld. The available pages are interesting but do not appear to be crucial to the thrust of the memo.

Item 481, CIA memo of June 19, 1964, 7 pages, on various entries in Oswald's address book.

This, like many other items, interests me because of what it may show about CIA procedure, including the extent of their information on Americans. (See section D of the subject guide.)

There are many deletions - e.g., re Murret, "(deleted) files contain no information identifiable with above." The deletion appears to be 3 letters. Since this was typed on an executive typewriter (proportional spacing), we might be able to tell with some precision which 3-letter CIA components could fit in the space. (E.g., DCS would take up more space than DII.) (If anyone tries this, let me know what you come up with!) On p. 3, there is a deletion which appears to relate to DeMohrenschildt; on p. 4, a substantial section on Davison (the spy/doctor at the Embassy in Moscow) is withheld.

Item 485, CIA internal memo of Dec. 9, 1966, 1 page, re press contacts.

This reports a phone call from John Finney of the NY Times (whose name was not deleted!) This was at the time of the aborted NYT reinvestigation. (See the Policoff article in our anthology.) Finney asked if the mystery man in the photo was Kostikov - he claimed he had gotten that from a classified report, CD 347. He was bluffing - CD 347 (which I haven't seen) certainly says no such thing, but the CD list reveals that a photo of Kostikov is attached. The CIA checked and then told him that "the picture has nothing to do with the case; no significance in the controversy." Incredible! Perhaps enjoying his little triumph, the CIA man wrote that "Mr. Finney expressed appreciation for the off-the-record guidance."

Item 497, re Nosenko - apparently 10 pages selected from a large report on the KGB.

This is one of several Nosenko items, which have received some press attention. We learned the overall outlines of the Nosenko matter earlier. This report points out some problems with Nosenko's story. Page 309 points out that "Nosenko's apparent ignorance of Oswald's communications with the Soviet Embassy in Washington discredits his claim to complete knowledge of all aspects of the KGB relationship with Oswald. There is also reference to ~~that~~ the fact that Kostikov, who apparently dealt with Oswald on visa matters in Mexico, was associated with the 13th Department of the KGB, whose responsibilities included assassination and sabotage. (See item 296)

I think that both the flaws in Nosenko's story and the Kostikov KGB connection have been overemphasized in certain press reports. The fact that Kostikov worked for the KGB was known to the Warren Commission and mentioned in the Report (although the 13th Department link may not have been known). The Warren Report correctly pointed out that KGB officials with this kind of cover carry out normal overt duties, and that Oswald apparently was trying to get a visa for Russia. (It is very unlikely that he and Kostikov would have met for a sinister purpose in the heavily surveilled Embassy, and that Oswald would have then mentioned Kostikov in a letter to the Embassy in Washington which was, predictably, intercepted by the FBI.) Nosenko may well have been a KGB plant who did not tell (or know) the full story, but the unstated implication that the KGB was behind the assassination certainly does not follow without much more evidence. The FBI's lying about the Hosty note (or even about Oswald's possible informant status) certainly does not implicate anyone in the FBI in the assassination, and the fact that Oswald met an American spy (Davison) at the Embassy in Moscow can not be interpreted without reference to the fact that he performed the routine physical examination of Marina Oswald before the trip to the U.S.

A note on the just-released CD's:

As a whole, the 655 pages I have obtained from the Archives are much less interesting than this CIA material. One document, CD 1084A, is relevant to the revival of the anti-Castro hypothesis. It is an FBI "working paper" prepared within 5 days of the assassination, naming Oswald as the lone assassin. It was used to brief Ambassador Mann, whose apparent hard-line position is now being clarified. This document tied Oswald quite closely to the Cuban government; these links were toned down in CD 1. (Refer to my separate memo on CD 1084A.)

Press reports on the CIA material:

March 21, 1976, AP (Martin) in the L.A. Times, p. 20: "Warren Report underrated foreign plot leads in Kennedy death, CIA memo says." Re item 451, with Belin comments.

March 22, 1976, UP in the S.F. Chronicle, p. 7: "Memo on JFK death talks of wider probe," Re item 451, with Belin comments.

March 23, AP in L.A. Times, p. 2, re information from a Cuban defector (items 294-5, 319)

March 23, AP in the Oakland Tribune, p. 2: "Warren panel dispute: Why Castro story wasn't reported." Re item 451, Liebeler memo of 9/16/64, and Liebeler comments.

March 23, Jack Nelson (L.A. Times), p. 1: "CIA discredits defector's statements about Oswald." Re item 497 (Nosenko).

March 24, AP (Martin) in the Oakland Tribune, p. 5: "Columnist's memo to CIA (on JFK death)" Re item 310 (Pearson).

March 25, AP in the S.F. Chronicle (p. 6): "Oswald case: KGB defector's 3-year grilling." Re info on Nosenko in the Rockefeller Report, etc.

April 4, Norman Kempster (L.A. Times), p. 14: "Oswald met with KGB agent, CIA data show." Re items 296, 254 (Soviet use of assassination and kidnapping), 433 (Joesten), 448, and others, with Belin comments.

April 26, Dick Russell, Village Voice, p. 17: "New assassination questions: What was in the CIA's declassified JFK file?" Re item 175 (the gun), 256 (3/12 meeting with WC re LHO and the CIA), 400 (parallels between LHO and another defector (?), (6 letters, Detroit link)), 154, 310, 254, 493-4 (Castro speeches), Kostikov (various items), 115 (Castro-Chicom-Fieto plot), 27 (early rumors), 294 &c (DGI story), 14 (transmittal of photos), 337 (CD 1287), 83 (Wilson-Santos-Ruby), 247 (Ruby not in Cuba), 439 (Ruby in Israel), 414 (CD list at Archives), 2 unavailable memos on Shaw, 330 (DeM), 143 (Ruedolo), 48 (Arnesto Rodriguez).

Paul L. Hoch
May 6, 1976