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Commission No.

944

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

19 MAY 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy

SUBJECT: Hours of Work at Cuban and Soviet Consulates;
Procedures and Regulations for Issuance of
Cuban Visas; Mexican Control of U.S. Citizens'
Travel to and from Cuba

1. I refer to your memorandum dated 24 April, in which you request information on hours of work at Cuban and Soviet diplomatic installations in Mexico City, details of regulations governing the issuance of Cuban travel documents and Mexican control of U.S. citizens travelling to and from Cuba through Mexico.

2. The Soviet Embassy and Consulate are not open to the public; offices in the Soviet compound may be visited by appointment only. A twenty-four-hour guard is mounted at the entrance to the compound in which these Soviet installations are located. Visitors ring the bell at this entrance at all hours. Russian-speaking visitors are permitted to enter at any time, but others are usually turned away by the guard after normal hours of work. Normal work hours during September 1963, when Lee Harvey OSWALD visited the Soviet installation, were 0900 to 1800. Recently, however, the hours for Mondays and Fridays have been changed to 0900 to 1400 hours. Sixteen Soviet families live in the compound.

3. The Cuban Embassy and Consulate are located in their own compound, but these installations have separate entrances. Visitors may enter the Cuban Consulate from 1000 to 1400 hours,

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Monday through Friday. Embassy working hours are 0900 to 1700 on the same days. Visitors to the Embassy, however, usually appear before 1400 hours. These work hours were also in effect during September 1963.

4. Prior authorization from the Ministry of the Exterior in Havana is required before Cuban visas may be issued. On occasion, requests for permission to issue visas and the resulting decisions are handled by cable. The applicant fills out a visa application form at the Cuban consulate. Cuban visas are normally valid for three months from date of issuance. Visas may be issued on separate sheets of paper to conceal the fact that travel to Cuba was performed. The Soviets are not known to issue travel permits to Cuba.

5. The Government of Mexico recognizes the passport as an identification document only. Mexican immigration officials do not recognize passport entries prohibiting the bearer's travel to Cuba, if the bearer holds a visa valid for travel to that country. Amendment of Mexican laws to permit recognition of travel restrictions affixed by governments issuing passports has been under consideration, but no action thereon has presently been taken.

6. Non-Cubans, including U.S. citizens, entering Mexico from Cuba must have Mexican visas or tourist cards. Depending on their outgoing flight times, non-Cubans transiting Mexico do not always need a transit visa. The passports of all persons travelling between Mexico and Cuba are stamped in Spanish with the phrases "Departed for Cuba" or "Entered from Cuba", as appropriate. All passengers, including non-Cubans, entering Mexico from Cuba are openly photographed while their documents are being examined.

7. We hope that the information given above meets your need for data on travel between Mexico and Cuba.

Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Deputy Director for Plans

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