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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
25 November 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Fidel Castro's Speech

1. Fidel Castro's two-hour speech on 23 November, which he termed an "objective analysis" of the implications of President Kennedy's assassination, reflected apprehension that US policy toward Cuba may now become even tougher. Castro said the President's death was "serious and bad news" which could lead from "a bad situation to a worse situation." He pointed out that President Kennedy's alleged promise not to invade Cuba had been strongly attacked by those "ultrareactionaries" in the United States who, he said, now are using the assassination to create a climate of "anti-Soviet, anti-Cuban hysteria" designed to pressure the new President toward a Cuban policy "highly prejudicial to the interests of peace and of mankind."

2. Castro declared that the assassination can only benefit "those ultrarightist and ultrareactionary sectors, among which President Kennedy could not be counted." These "most reactionary forces are now breaking loose within the United States," he declared. President Kennedy was a strong president who was able to control these pressures, but the new US President, because of the circumstances inherent in his assumption of the presidency, will not have the same strength and authority, Castro said.

3. Castro then read a series of US news despatches referring to the Castro-Communist affiliations of Lee Harvey Oswald. He said this was all part of the "reactionary" effort to create a climate of "anti-Soviet, anti-Cuban hysteria" in the United States. This climate of hysteria, he said, is designed to face the new President with an irresistible pressure toward a "more aggressive policy."

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4. Castro devoted considerable time to an attempt to throw doubt on the guilt of the accused assassin and to insinuate that Oswald, whether guilty or innocent, was actually a tool of the extreme rightists. "Is he really guilty? Is he a scapegoat? Is he a psychopath? Or is he perhaps a tool of the most reactionary US circles? Who is this man? Why did he go into action precisely when circumstances were least favorable for a left-wing fanatic to assassinate the US President?"

5. Castro stated that his investigation of the "reports, statements, and publicity" on the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in the United States failed to indicate that there was any chapter in Dallas or New Orleans, and that "we never in our life heard of him (Oswald)." Castro referred to US press reports on Oswald's attempt last summer to "infiltrate" the anti-Castro Student Revolutionary Directorate (DRE) in the US and to DRE statements that Oswald was thought at that time to be "an agent of the FBI or the CIA." They (the DRE leaders) must know, because they have many dealings with them, what FBI and CIA agents look like," Castro stated.

6. Castro then declared that, while Oswald may or may not be guilty, it is nevertheless possible that he was "an agent for the CIA or the FBI, as those people suspected" and could have been "a tool of the most reactionary sectors which may have been hatching a sinister plan, which may have plotted the assassination of Kennedy because they disagreed with his international policy.... What is behind all this? What sinister maneuver are they hatching behind all this? Who can be responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy? And who benefits from the assassination...except the worst reactionaries?"

7. Castro warned that it is not possible at this point to answer these questions, "but we do say that it is suspect, that we must be cautious and vigilant and alert." Castro closed with the usual expressions of confidence that the Cubans will be ready to meet any new crisis with resolution.