

6 April 1964

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

SUBJECT: Reply to Questions Contained in Your  
Memorandum dated 12 March 1964

Attached herewith is the information which you requested  
in your memorandum dated 12 March 1964 and entitled "Certain  
Questions Posed by the State Department Files."

*Der J. Rankin*

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1. OSWALD's travel from Minak to Moscow and return in July 1961 would normally have required prior authorization. Bearers of a Soviet "passport for foreigners" (vid na zhitelstvo v SSSR diya innostrantsa) are required to obtain travel authorization from the Visa and Registration Department (OVIR) (or Passport Registration Department (PRO) in smaller towns) if they desire to leave the city (or oblast) where they are domiciled. This same requirement is believed to apply to persons, such as OSWALD, holding Soviet "stateless passports" (vid na zhitelstvo v SSSR diya lits bez grazhdanstva).

2. The practicality of even "unauthorized" travel was demonstrated by events related by \_\_\_\_\_ a United States citizen who defected from his US Army unit in Germany on 19 August 1960, and subsequently was sent to Kiev to study. After his repatriation in 1963, <sup>HE</sup> told US authorities that he had made a total of seven unauthorized trips from Kiev during the 1961-1963 period. One of these trips was a flight to Moscow on 1 May 1961, only two months before OSWALD's flight.

<sup>HE</sup> was apprehended on two of his seven trips, and was returned to Kiev each time, the second time under escort. On both occasions he was merely reprimanded by the deputy chief of the institute at which he was studying. Since Marina had a Soviet citizen's internal passport, there would have been no restrictions against her making the trip to Moscow.

3. There are no legal restrictions against persons, including Soviet citizens, entering the American Embassy in Moscow; in fact, the Soviet government guarantees the principle of unhindered access to the Embassy. In practice, however, the Embassy perimeter is patrolled by uniformed militia [civil police] personnel, and the Embassy gate is guarded constantly by two militiamen. These "militiamen" are actually personnel of the Committee for State Security (KGB). Anyone who is not readily identifiable as a foreigner and who has not had his visit announced in advance, is stopped and asked for his name, documents, and business with the Embassy. Any Soviet citizen who does not have legitimate business with the Embassy is taken away for interrogation. Should someone force or bluff his way into the Embassy, he would be picked up when he departed.

Such measures are

Such measures are taken, according to Soviet explanation, to protect the Embassy from intrusion by "hooligans" and other undesirable elements. OSWALD might well have been stopped by the militia at the gate, but since he carried a stateless passport and was probably identifiable as an American by name, accent and possibly clothing, would probably not have been prevented from entering. Marina also would probably not have been hindered, since she was the wife of a foreigner and had legitimate business in the Embassy.

4. OSWALD said that he asked for Soviet citizenship on 16 October 1959. According to his diary, he received word a month later that he could stay in the USSR pending disposition of his request, but it was another month and a half before he was given his stateless passport.

5. When compared to five other defector cases, this procedure seems unexceptional. Two defectors, \_\_\_\_\_ appear to have been given citizenship immediately, but both had prior KGB connections and were as a result of Army security checks. Of the other three cases, one was accepted after not more than five weeks and given a stateless passport apparently at about the same time. The second was immediately given permission to stay for a while, and his subsequent request for citizenship was granted three months later. The third was allowed to stay after he made his citizenship request, but almost two months passed before he was told that he had been accepted. Although the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs soon after told the US Embassy that he was a Soviet citizen, he did not receive his document until five or six months after initial application. We know of only one case in which an American asked for Soviet citizenship but did not take up residence in the USSR. In that instance, the American changed his mind and voluntarily returned to the United States less than three weeks after he had requested Soviet citizenship.

6. So far as we are able to determine, there is no Soviet law which would prevent a Soviet citizen married to a foreign national from accompanying his or her spouse from the USSR. This situation is also believed to have existed at the time of the OSWALDs' departure from the Soviet Union in 1962. In practice, however, permission for a Soviet wife

/ to accompany her

to accompany her foreign national husband abroad is rarely given. In almost every case available for our review, the foreign national was obliged to depart the USSR alone and either return to escort his wife out, or arrange for her exit while he was still abroad. In some cases, the wife was never granted permission to leave. The majority of cases reviewed involve foreign students, exchange teachers, and other relatively transient persons, and while a number of cases have certain points in common, they bear little similarity to the OSWALD case; none involved a defector who married prior to repatriating.

7. The time lapse involved in Soviet processing of the OSWALDs' departure documentation appears to be normal. Marina began assembling the documents necessary for an exit visa in May 1961, and both OSWALDs actually applied on 20 August 1961, according to Marina's statement and OSWALD's diary. Marina's exit visa was issued at the time her new passport was issued, 11 January 1962, although she had been informed by Soviet authorities about 1 January 1962 that the visa would be issued. Lee OSWALD's exit visa was not issued until 22 May 1962, although he, too, apparently had been told in early January 1962 that the visa would be granted. The time lapse between actual application and notice of approval was over four months. By way of comparison, some Soviet wives have been held in the USSR for years, while in two specific cases involving Swedish national husbands, the Soviet wives were processed out in less than four months.

8. Issuance of a stateless passport (which may be called a sojourn permit or stateless person identity document - *vid na-zhitelstvo dlya lits bez grazhdanstva*) is not unusual. Such a document was issued to US Army deserter \_\_\_\_\_ who defected through East Germany to the USSR in August 1960 and was subsequently sent to Kiev as a student before he repatriated, in July 1963. According to United States Embassy Airgram \_\_\_\_\_ dated 4 September 1962, \_\_\_\_\_ "was officially documented by the Soviet authorities as a stateless person, which is normal for a non-Soviet citizen not in possession of a valid national passport." \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>He</sup> of course, did not have a passport when he deserted and OSWALD had left his at the US Embassy on 31 October 1959.

/Available exemplars of

Available exemplars of stateless passports indicate that they are valid for one year from date of issue. An exemplar from the year 1960 (the year of issue of OSWALD's document) shows that it had been renewed for an additional one-year period beyond its original expiration date (as OSWALD claimed for his own document). Available exemplars show that the bearer was obliged to report to the local OVIR (Visa and Registration Department) or the PRO (Passport and Registration Department) office quarterly to register. We have no information to indicate whether OSWALD reported periodically for the same purpose.

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27 November 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief,

SUBJECT:

Assassination /

*Soviet Defector*  
Comments on President Kennedy's

1. We should understand that my comments which follow are not based solely on the thesis that OSWALD was specifically dispatched to murder our President. The very real possibility also exists that OSWALD was sent here on another mission by the KGB and subsequently accomplished the deed on his own initiative. However, such a possibility does not make the KGB less culpable as the seeds for OSWALD's act must have been planted while he was being trained in the USSR for his other mission. We might first examine the question uppermost in the minds of most Americans, "What did the USSR have to gain by killing the President?" I believe we can make a good case as to the precise gains accruing to the USSR and more specifically accruing to KHRUSHCHEV. In preface let me admonish my readers not to play down the political aspects of Soviet intelligence operations. The American intelligence services' apolitical approach to interpreting and countering Soviet intelligence operations frankly frightens me at times. But more specifically the assassination of President Kennedy would accomplish the following for KHRUSHCHEV personally:

a. Western pressure behind the leadership of the USA would automatically ease up. Witness President Johnson's immediate conciliatory telegram to KHRUSHCHEV, after the murder. We might mention that the USA was the chief proponent for not extending long range credits to the USSR. Extension of long range credits is vital to the USSR at this juncture.

b. This leads us into the most pressing problem within the USSR. The West persistently underrates the extent of the Soviet internal situation. It was my prediction that as a result of the mismanagement of the 1963 harvest and the CHICOM arguments that KHRUSHCHEV would resign during the upcoming December plenum of the Communist Party of the USSR. Our President's death thus effectively diverts the Soviets' attention from their internal problems. It directly affects KHRUSHCHEV's longevity.

c. In the Cuban situation any USA or Cuban expatriate actions against Cuba will now be tainted by the fact that these are vengeful acts against Cuba because of OSWALD's "Fair Play for Cuba" associations. Obviously the Soviets properly interpret our situation in that President JOHNSON will restrain any planned interventions in Cuba for a long time.

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d. A more amenable America will strengthen KHRUSHCHEV's hand in his running battle with the CHICOMS. He will thus have another reason to say his form of peaceful coexistence is superior to that of the CHICOMS'.

e. Conceivably any of President KENNEDY's planned actions to get even more firm with the Soviets during the pre-election year are thus sabotaged by the President's murder.

f. The Soviets obviously understood that the death of President KENNEDY would result in the emergence of DeGAULLE as a strong Western leader. DeGAULLE of course says "what's good for France is not necessarily bad for the USSR."

g. The death of President KENNEDY removes a popular rallying point for our allies. Furthermore, and more pertinent, his death removes a symbol for Soviet intellectuals who have inevitably made invidious comparisons between their own intellectual desert and the flowering of the arts under the KENNEDYs. The problem of the intellectuals in the USSR should not be interpreted as the least of KHRUSHCHEV's internal problems. We must recall that beginning with Lenin, intellectuals have provided the impetus for revolution in the USSR and they comprise one of the three balls KHRUSHCHEV must constantly juggle—the intellectuals, the Party and the Military.

h. If the USSR has any ambitious aims in manipulating U.S. public opinion their murder of President KENNEDY would serve to exacerbate the present differences between the radical left and right in America. In fact the USSR propaganda machine began to say the murder was committed by the radical right as soon as the deed was done and before OSWALD was captured.

1. Finally, the death of President KENNEDY, whether a planned operation or not, will serve the most obvious purpose of providing proof of the power and omniscience of the KGB. This application of sheer terror could be interpreted as a warning to Russia's own citizens, as the Soviet intelligence services have suffered some very real reverses recently with FENKOVSEY, GOLITSIN's defection, their ignominious expulsion from the Congo, etc. I have long predicted that the USSR would take some drastic action to halt the rapid erosion of their security.

2. Can we briefly view the OSWALD operation as a mounted KGB operation to kill the President? What are the essential ingredients?

a. The KGB had some three years to assess OSWALD in the USSR. Laymen will deprecate the value that the KGB attaches to such on the

spot assessment. They may also say that OSWALD was a nut and properly would not be entrusted with such an operation by the KGB. However the KGB properly knows that historically most assassins have been unbalanced maladjusted types.

b. In such an operation the KGB could not use a Soviet citizen though the very real possibility exists that OSWALD was assisted by a Soviet illegal of the KGB 13th Department. Sticking to essentials-- It was a good plan that did succeed.

c. OSWALD did escape from the book building.

d. He did get to a theater which could have been his point of contact with his illegal case officer. Certainly we know the KGB's penchant for using theaters for meeting places.

e. After his arrest, which was only due to his unfortunate encounter with Policemen TIPPET, OSWALD did remain silent. How like the behavior of Col. ABEL was his behavior in this regard.

3. Also the very real possibility exists that the KGB intended to liquidate OSWALD after he did the job. His meeting in the theater was probably for just such a liquidation or removal from the scene. In RUBY's part in the operation we must recognize the possibility that RUBY was also a KGB hatchet man. Looking at the bare essentials of his part in the operation we see the following:

a. RUBY had access to the police station. Reports say he personally knew most policemen.

b. He successfully silenced OSWALD.

c. RUBY remains silent and his cover is holding up.

d. He has a good legend of temporary insanity.

e. He has a reasonable chance to escape the death sentence.

4. The undersigned might be better qualified to comment on the OSWALD aspects of this case if we knew the following about his activities prior to his departure to the USSR: (a., b., and c. below offer three possible answers to the question, "Why did he go to Moscow?")

a. First, OSWALD was a self-made Marxist or Communist who decided to go on his own; that is, he made this decision by himself and prompted by no one. He possibly was looking for a better life without knowing what the Soviet Union really is.



b. Second, after OSWALD's discharge as an "undesirable" from the Marines, he found himself in a difficult and unpleasant situation; is it possible that in this situation he was noticed by a spotter or recruiter for the Illegals or some other department and was considered as a possible candidate for use or recruitment? The full information about OSWALD was sent to Moscow, and on Moscow's order an investigation of OSWALD was made and there followed a decision to "invite" him to Moscow. Using the word "invite", the undersigned has in mind that some agents or recruiters through conversations with OSWALD, but without actually suggesting the trip itself, inspired OSWALD to travel to the USSR. And, in this case, it is possible that someone gave him some financial assistance and some advice on how to do this.

c. Third, OSWALD went to Moscow, or was sent to Moscow, by some pro-Soviet, pro-Communist, pro-Cuban organization(s), having in mind that he would stay in the Soviet Union for a few years, learning more about the Soviet Union and receiving instructions for future operations, activities, etc.

5. Knowing for sure that the Soviets never give a visa without making an investigation of the person making the application, we have to make our own investigation of the following questions:

a. When did OSWALD first begin to express his wish to go to the Soviet Union?

b. To whom did he talk, whom did he contact at this early time, and how much time elapsed between these talks and contacts and his application?

c. How, when and through whom did OSWALD get his Soviet visa?

d. How long did it take for him to get the visa?

e. Who personally gave the visa to OSWALD? We must know if the person at the Embassy who talked to OSWALD was a KGB employee.

f. When and how did OSWALD travel to the USSR (air, sea; through which countries; in which countries, if any, did he make stops; how long were such stops)?

6. Together with the above, it is very important to know of OSWALD's circumstances before his trip to the USSR. Who knew in advance that he was going and who knew that he had gone: Mother, brother, relatives, friends, neighbors, girl friends, boy friends, old buddies, etc.?

To whom did OSWALD say goodbye before he left for the USSR: personally or by telephone, by mail? Did he ever ask anyone any questions on traveling to the USSR? Whom?

6. OSWALD in Moscow. When OSWALD arrived in Moscow, he was under observation, investigation and complete control by the KGB. In this particular case, under the Second Chief Directorate (CI). Being under the control of the KGB, at the same time he was under heavy investigation directed at answering the question of why this stupid American had come to the USSR (it doesn't make any difference whether they knew in advance about OSWALD or not; anyway, they would conduct such an investigation). Every possible bit of information was taken from OSWALD about the USA, especially about his service in the Marine Corps, etc. At the same time, OSWALD was under constant observation and study for possible future use by the Soviet Intelligence and CI services.

7. It should be noted here that any foreigner, especially an American, who arrives in the USSR for permanent or prolonged stay always is examined by the Soviet State Security as a possible candidate for future use (special training and recruitment) within the USA or other countries (but against the USA). After a good study and investigation which continues about six months in Moscow, under normal financial support and minimum comfort from the KGB, the KGB makes its conclusions: that OSWALD is clear and is who he claims to be and that he might possibly be used or useful for Soviet Intelligence or CI Service. NOTE: the undersigned believes that during his (OSWALD's) first few months in Moscow, additional inquiry and investigation of OSWALD was going on through the Soviet Embassy in Washington and through Soviet agent networks in the USA and possibly through pro-Soviet and pro-Communist organizations within the USA.

8. After being a few weeks or months in Moscow, OSWALD expressed a wish to stay forever in the Soviet Union and to be a Soviet citizen. Then the KGB said to him: "If you really want to be a Soviet citizen and serve the Communist cause, you must denounce American Imperialism and American citizenship." Therefore, somewhere in this period, OSWALD went to the US Embassy and renounced his US citizenship. After this act State Security decided to give OSWALD some kind of job in accordance with his knowledge and capabilities, at the same time continuing to study him as a potential agent.

9. Because to make a good agent takes a long time and because OSWALD was impatient—and because he had not yet been given Soviet citizenship—the KGB decided not to make of him a good agent, but did not break relations with him and decided to use him in a more or less open way.

10. When OSWALD showed some dissatisfaction about the Soviet way of life (it is usual for Americans)—and by this time OSWALD had already met his girl friend (the KGB probably helped him to find her—to make him happy and to make sure that he would not leave the Soviet Union)—the KGB at the same time continued to train him, probably in the way of an old-fashioned Marxist, telling him that he would be a good fighter against imperialists and against American millionaires, such as ROCKEFELLER, KENNEDY and others. And somewhere here, while in this kind of training, a low level case officer of State Security told him that to have a better life in the US you have to fight very hard to bury capitalism, as our Nikita Sergeyevich says; together with capitalism, you have to bury all the millionaires, including your first beast and blood-sucker, KENNEDY (NOTE: this is not a tall story; it is the way in which State Security operates with the stupid Marxists and with naive followers of the Communist movement). If on a high level within the KGB it was decided that there is nothing good in OSWALD and that he is just a naive American and that he could not be relied upon fully, but that nonetheless he could be used because he is for our cause and is against capitalism in general, then the following would have been suggested—after OSWALD already had asked permission to return to the USA: OSWALD was told to be a good fighter against capitalism and to secure your Soviet citizenship, you must show yourself as a good fighter for the Communist cause inside the USA; then, we give you permission because we believe you are a strong Marxist to return to the USA and to do something for our common cause, such as to help any American pro-Soviet organizations or, for instance, become a member of a Free Cuba Committee or in case of crisis to do something outstanding—that will be noticeable everywhere—that will prove that you are a real Communist. Then, somewhere here, if he was already a Soviet agent or not, the girl showed up, or she was there before, but by this time she was pregnant and OSWALD decided to go to the USA. Then he was told. After this talk, OSWALD shouted—where is your freedom? She is my wife, we have a child, and I would like to go. If he did make a big noise, they decided to let him and her go; or if he already was a trained agent, then without any kind of noise on his part, but with some difficulties, permission was granted for her to go with him.

11. Looking at the wife of OSWALD, we should have in mind that she was and still is an agent or at least a low-level informant of the KGB. If she was not before she met OSWALD, she became so after the second day she met him. This is the regulation in State Security on how to handle foreigners—it makes no difference whether they are Communists or not.

12. Investigation of OSWALD's wife should be undertaken as soon as possible, with special attention being paid the questions to follow:

a. First, who is she? Her education, profession, age, family background, Party affiliation (Komsomol membership). If she was a member of the Komsomol, then the Komsomol organization will take any steps possible against her traveling to the US. Also, she must be expelled from the Komsomol, and then she automatically would be considered a member of the Imperialist Camp. Then, if she was a member of the Komsomol and this action did not take place, it was because of KGB interference against such action. The same action would relate to any of her relatives—father, mother, brothers....if they were members of the CPSU or Komsomol.

b. To which offices was she invited before and after their marriage? If she was invited to some official Soviet offices, and if these offices asked her not to marry a foreigner and not to go with him, then probably she was not a member of the Komsomol and she did it on her own will; but if she answers that no one invited her to such offices, then the whole job was done by the KGB—smoothly and quietly, with no talk going around about it.

c. Who helped her and how many times to write papers for the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs to say that she had married an American citizen and would like to go with him to the USA? If it was done a few times and with great difficulties, then probably it was done only with a little help from the KGB. If, however, the papers were prepared only once and permission was granted after only a few months' wait, then everything was done by the KGB. (According to the American newspapers, her application for permission to come to the US was processed very easily and quickly.)

d. When and where did they register their marriage? Who were the witnesses to that marriage? How many relatives and friends (of wife) were present at the wedding and celebration. What kind of gifts did they receive at the time of marriage and from whom? Where did they take up residence after marriage? Were they given an apartment, or a room? And in what neighborhood?

e. Where did her husband, OSWALD, work? In what factory? What were his hours of work? How long did he spend in Moscow before he went to Minsk? Who chose Minsk—did he or did someone else?

f. Who were her husband's friends? From what circles? Workers? Intellectuals?

g. How many times were she and her husband—while they lived together --- invited to the police stations or any other Soviet government offices, together or separately? (NOTE: There is no other office than the KGB which would make such an invitation. It makes no difference if they were agents or not.)

h. How smart (intelligent) is she? Does she really speak no English? Is her English better than she shows or better than it should be after being here only two years? Or worse?

1. What does she say about life in the Soviet Union?

j. Did her husband have a gun while he was in the Soviet Union? If so, how does she know about it? When did he get it? Did he have special permission to carry a gun? Did he bring this gun with him across the border? For your information, nobody carries a gun in the USSR without the KGB eventually learning of it. Least of all an American.

k. Who gave financial help to them before they left the Soviet Union? (NOTE: For a regular worker in the Soviet Union, it is impossible to save enough money to buy a ticket and make any kind of preparations to go abroad.)

l. Who gave instructions to OSWALD to ask for financial assistance at the American Embassy upon his return to the USA?

m. Was their first child born in Russia--baptized in the USSR? If so, in what church? Whose idea was it? Did they baptize their second child, born in the US?

n. If OSWALD never had a permanent job here in the USA, then who was going to finance his next trip to the USSR? How much did his wife know about his plan to return to the USSR via Cuba?

13. The investigation of the wife should be made step by step, keeping in mind and never forgetting that OSWALD as well as she herself were under constant observation and with constant contacts with organs of the KGB. Without such observation and contacts with organs of the KGB, no foreigner can live within the Soviet Union.

14. In any investigation of this case we should not lose the initiative. In view of the extraordinary circumstances surrounding this case the FBI, through the Department of State, could logically enough request that the USSR provide all available info on OSWALD's story in the USSR and the purpose of his visit to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City. A friendly nation can be expected to ~~make~~ such a request. We might learn a great deal from the Soviet reply. HONOR