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11 December 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR:  
THROUGH :  
FROM :  
SUBJECT :

Additional Notes and Comments on the Oswald Case - Summary of RUSSELLS for not concluding Soviet involvement with OSWALD

Leahy & Co-1

376-154

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1. According to the New York Times for 10 December, the FBI report on the assassination of President Kennedy categorically states that Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin, that he acted alone, and that there is no evidence to indicate that he was the agent of any foreign government. These disclosures presumably eliminate the possibility of further confrontations with Mr. Robert Slusser. In the event that Mr. Slusser 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.

2. Long standing KGB practice generally forbids agents serving outside the USSR to have any contact with domestic communist parties or with Soviet embassies or consulates.

Yet Oswald blazed a trail to the Soviets which was a mile wide. He corresponded with the national headquarters of the Communist Party USA—apparently with some regularity—and visited the Soviet Consulate in Mexico City. In addition to his well-known leftist political activities,

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he also subscribed to the Daily Worker and a Trotskyite publication, allegedly received newspapers from the Soviet Union, and asked last June that his passport be re-validated for travel to the USSR.

3. Certain facets of Oswald's activities in the USSR also argue strongly that the KGB would never have recruited him for a mission of any kind. First, there is no doubt that Oswald was debriefed by the secret police shortly after his arrival in Moscow. They were interested in him not only because he was a political defector, but also because he boasted publicly—in the Embassy on 31 October 1959—that he intended to tell the Soviets "everything he knew" about Marine Corps radar installations on the West Coast. / According to Oswald's former commanding officer, this included the locations of all radar units and their secret call signs, authentication codes and radio frequencies—all of which knowledge was grist for the Soviet intelligence mill.

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/it is extremely unlikely that Oswald—with his Russian wife—was even seriously considered for subsequent repatriation to the United States as a KGB asset. As a re-defector from the USSR he would immediately be suspect and thus under surveillance by the FBI. Furthermore, any indication that he had made good on his boast about the radars could easily lead to arrest and indictment on a charge of treason.

4. Secondly, Soviet "executive action" agents (assassins, saboteurs and terrorists) are carefully selected by the KGB and specifically trained for their missions. Oswald very probably ruled himself out of any consideration for this kind of operation. On 14 November 1959, Moscow refused his request for Soviet citizenship.; Shortly thereafter, he became despondent and reportedly attempted to kill himself by slashing his wrists. Even if the KGB had not earlier noted signs of mental aberrations, the suicide try presumably furnished convincing evidence that Oswald was not agent material.

5. Oswald's activities on a Dallas rifle range on 17 November are of some interest both as circumstantial evidence of prior planning to assassinate the President and as one more negative indication of KGB involvement.

Oswald was firing at a range of 100 yards. He was assigned to target number 8, but according to witnesses, was actually firing at targets 7, 8, and 9. He was thus firing through an arc of approximately 15 degrees and obviously seems to have been simulating fire at a moving target. It is, of course, most unlikely that a KGB agent on an executive action mission would be permitted (or would permit himself) to practice firing under such obvious and public circumstances.

6. The evidence presently available to us seems fairly conclusively to rule out any Soviet involvement in the President's assassination. There are, however, several rather fascinating inconsistencies, loose ends and unanswered questions about Oswald. Some, if not all, may be treated in the FBI report. Pending its publication, they are listed below for whatever they may be worth.

*M's uncle* a) In an interview last August, Oswald stated that his father-in-law was a Soviet army colonel who taught him to drink vodka when he came to court Marina. After the assassination, however, Mrs. Ruth Paine (some-time Oswald friend and landlady) stated that Marina's father, a colonel, had died when Marina was an infant.

b) To the tune of some \$437, the US picked up the tab for Oswald's return to this country. This loan was repaid between October 1962 and January 1963. During this period, Oswald was earning \$50 per week. Thus, over half of his total earnings went to the government and he supported himself, his wife and child on somewhat less than \$25 weekly. His rent at that time was \$59 per month. The possibility that he received outside help in repaying the government apparently has not been raised in the press.

c) In contrast to the letters Oswald wrote to his mother, Governor Connally and Senator Tower, his letters to the Fair Play for Cuba Committee are rather surprisingly literate. They do not appear to contain his frequent misspellings and ungrammatical language. There have been no suggestions that he received help in framing the letters, and he told the FPCC that he was financing his activities on its behalf out of his own pocket.

*Note* }  
 d) There is increasing evidence that Oswald and his wife were not happily married. She was well-liked and he was unpopular. She seemed genuinely fond of the United States, did not share his anti-American views and sometimes spoke of the hard life in the Soviet Union. Oswald resented her friends and beat her up on at least one occasion. Since he could not have planned the assassination of the President prior to 26 September—when the Dallas trip was announced—could it be that his application for a passport (without one for Marina) on 24 June, his application for a Mexican visa on 17 September and his trip to Mexico City on 26 September simply indicate that he planned to desert his wife and seek refuge in the Soviet Union?

e) Despite Mrs. Faine's testimony that Oswald could not drive, witnesses said he drove himself to the Dallas rifle range on one of his visits. He was driven there by an unidentified man on his other trip. One witness also claims that two men were involved in the attempt—evidently by Oswald—to shoot General Walker last April.

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