

Russians dismissed 1963

WASHINGTON (AP) — Shortly before President Kennedy was assassinated, the Soviet Embassy in Washington received a letter from Lee Harvey Oswald — a letter the Soviets privately believed was forged to make it look as if Oswald were working for them, newly released documents show.

"This letter was clearly a provocation: It gives the impression we had close ties with Oswald and were using him for some purposes of our own," Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin, Moscow's man in Washington for 24 years, wrote in an internal memo stamped *Highest Priority*.

Dobrynin thought the letter was a fake because it had a different tone

than previous letters the Soviets had received from Oswald, Kennedy's assassin, who lived in the communist nation between 1959 and 1962. Also, the letter received at the embassy on Nov. 18, 1963, had been typed, not handwritten like his earlier ones, Dobrynin noted.

The letter detailed Oswald's visit with a top KGB official in Mexico City just weeks before the assassination, prodded Soviet officials to get him and his wife visas to return to the Soviet Union and told how an FBI agent in Dallas talked to him about his past pro-Cuba activities.

Within a week, Kennedy was dead, and so was Oswald — shot by

Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby.

"One gets the definite impression that the letter was concocted by those who, judging from everything, are involved in the president's assassination," Dobrynin wrote.

"It is possible that Oswald himself wrote the letter as it was dictated to him, in return for some promises, and then, as we know, he was simply bumped off after his usefulness had ended."

The memo was contained in more than 80 pages of long-secret Soviet documents that Russian President Boris Yeltsin gave to President Clinton in June when the two were in Germany.

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letter from Oswald as a fake

The Soviets suspected it was forged to link them to JFK's assassination.

The documents offer the United States a previously unopened window into what top-level Soviet officials were thinking and talking about at the time Kennedy was killed Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas.

"They believed that there was a right-wing conspiracy to kill JFK and as part of the plot, it was made out to

look like Oswald was in the employ of the Soviet Union. That idea was dismissed by investigators early on," said John Newman, a University of Maryland history professor who has written books on Kennedy and Oswald.

Also included in the documents is a copy of an emotional cable written by Anastas Mikoyan, a top Soviet envoy who had been sent by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to Kennedy's funeral and a White House reception that followed.

Mikoyan said that Kennedy's widow, Jacqueline, clasped his hand with both her hands and told him, nearly sobbing: "I am sure that

Chairman Khrushchev and my husband could have been successful in the search for peace, and they were really striving for that."

Much of the material, however, was about Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union.

Oswald arrived there in October 1959 as a tourist and immediately asked to remain.

"I have lived in a decadent capitalist society where the workers are slaves. I have no desire to go to any other country," Oswald wrote in an appeal for Soviet citizenship. His handwritten letter, dated Oct. 16, 1959, was among the documents released.