

# Jackie Penned Note To Nikita

Entreated peace after JFK's death

By Michael Dorman

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Jacqueline Kennedy gave every indication in a letter to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev after her husband's assassination that she did not suspect the Soviet Union of conspiring in the murder.

Nine days after the assassination, she wrote a warm letter to Khrushchev, which was released yesterday by the National Archives, saying that he and John F. Kennedy were both committed to peace. "You and he were enemies, but you were also allies in your determination not to let the world be blown up," she wrote. "The danger troubling my husband was that war could be started not so much by major figures as by minor ones."

She also referred to Khrushchev's kindness at a Vienna summit meeting and to his wife, Nina, having tears in her eyes after paying respects at the American Embassy in Moscow following the assassination.

The letter to Khrushchev was among 80 assassination-related Soviet documents unexpectedly turned over to President Bill Clinton by Russian leader Boris Yeltsin during a summit meeting two months ago in Cologne, Germany. All the documents were released yesterday by the National Archives, the repository for government materials dealing with the assassination.

The Warren Commission appointed to investigate Kennedy's 1963 murder, after exploring accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald's defection to Russia from 1959 to 1962, said it could find no evidence implicating the Soviet Union in the assassination. But many conspiracy theories have suggest-



Jacqueline Kennedy chats with Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna on June 8, 1961.

ed Russian involvement. Jacqueline Kennedy's letter, however, contained no hint that she suspected the Soviets.

Referring to her late husband and Khrushchev, she wrote: "You respected each other and could have dealings with each other. I know that President [Lyndon] Johnson will make every effort to establish the same relations with you. I am sending you this letter because I am mindful of the importance of the relations that existed between you and my husband."

The documents released yesterday have been described by an expert as a "monumental breakthrough" in the continuing controversy over the assassination. Kermit Hall, a historian who served on the now-defunct federal board that reviewed and released Kennedy assassination files, said the Soviet documents may shed light on what Oswald was thinking and doing in the period before the assassination.

One Soviet document suggested that Russian officials believed a letter they received before Kennedy's assassination, ostensibly from Oswald, was forged by people who wanted to leave a paper trail indicating Oswald was working for Moscow. Other documents contain information the Soviets gathered on Oswald after his defection. Still others blamed a disinformation campaign drafted by the "real masterminds" of the assassination for trying to put the murder investigation on a false trail leading to Moscow.

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