

OUTSIDE CONTACT REPORTDATE March 17 TIME 10:30

## I. Identifying Information:

Name Jim Johnson Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Contact:  Telephone  
 Person

## II. Summary of Contact:

Jim Johnson, formerly with the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, was interviewed today by John Hornbeck, Patricia Orr, Jonathan Blackmer, Bill Triplett, and Jim Wolfe regarding his knowledge of the Senate Committee investigation of the possibility of Castro or anti-Castro Cuban involvement in the Kennedy assassination. Johnson was able to answer questions put to him, but was restricted as to what information he could volunteer. He did indicate that there were certain areas which he felt should be further pursued. He called our attention to pages 11-14 of Book V of the Select Committee's final report, which deals with Cuban groups active in 1963 after the U.S. government withdrew its support of much of the military action against Cuba; the impact of ongoing Cuban exile activities in the New Orleans

## III. Recommended Follow-up (if any):

Request files on operations against Cuba prior to the assassination; files on the "Cuban-American" of Book V; and other

files as recommended in the summary.  
Signature: MO

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area and Lee Harvey Oswald's interest in it; and the approach that the Special group and government agencies were taking in their actions against Cuba.

There are three Cuban groups which Johnson felt were worth further investigation: Alpha 66; SFNE (although it was unclear to Johnson what role SFNE played vis à vis Alpha 66); Comandos L-66; and the DRE, the group with which Carlos Binguier was associated. Several DIA and CIA case officers were interviewed by Johnson, but the staff of the Senate Committee did not interview or take testimony of any Cubans in these groups except Antonio Veciana, whose credibility is high, according to Johnson. Johnson indicated that while Veciana's case officer did not fit into any neat categories, he was connected with military intelligence. The committee attempted to locate or identify Maurice Bishop without success.

Johnson said he did not look at documents dated prior to 1963 in many instances, and recommended that we look at the earlier dated files. He also indicated that the June-July 1963 meetings of Cuban leaders and Somoza or officials of other Latin American countries interested in the anti-Castro movement could be of interest, since they reflect attempts to reorganize the anti-Castro movement following the withdrawal of most U.S. support. These attempts may involve wealthy Cuban emigres. (Proverbially, the wealthy Cubans went to other Latin American countries; the poorer Cubans, who often became the footsoldiers of the

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anti-Castro movement, usually exiled to the United States).

Johnson believes that activity in Puerto Rico in August 1963 also bears looking into. Several Cuban groups, such as the DRE, were meeting in Puerto Rico at this time for fund-raising activities. Johnson pointed out that Orest Pena visited Puerto Rico in August of 1963, however, the purpose of his trip may not have been fully investigated by the Warren Commission. Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo of SFNE also began his fund-raising tour at this time.

Johnson recommends we specifically check station files in Puerto Rico and other stations for integration of reports into the main Washington files, since many files were not sent to Washington headquarters as a matter of routine. The Senate Committee made no attempts to obtain these files. Johnson found military intelligence had destroyed many files and hence, it was difficult to reconstruct their operations. Also, in 1963 there were many intelligence operations and special groups which did not fall into the agency structures in any normal way, and these might be more difficult to obtain documentation on. However, Johnson recommended we request files on operations directed against Cuba after 1962, with special attention to Puerto Rico in August of 1963.

Johnson also went over some specific events and individuals of interest, such as AM/LASH, which in October 1963 was completely insecure since the FBI had received information

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on October 10, 1963 from an informant about the identity of AM/LASH and the imminent meeting between AM/LASH and his CIA contact. Johnson said the FBI would not give the Senate Committee the name of the informant, however, he did not believe it was Victor Espinosa Hernandez since the FBI was trying to locate Espinosa at this time in regards to the summer explosives arrest at Lake Ponchartrain.

With respect to the nature of CIA operations against Cuba in 1963, Johnson maintained that agency plans had become more sophisticated, such as the use of AM/LASH in assassination plots. Some military raids were taken against Cuba in the summer and fall of 1963 to keep Cuban exile morale up, but generally there was a tough crack-down on such activity and agency involvement was usually restricted to intelligence gathering rather than hit-and-run tactics.

With respect to Lake Ponchartrain training camps, Johnson believed the camps were set up mostly to obtain right wing backing for anti-Castro operations. The McLaney camp, which was not fully investigated by the FBI, appears to have been a relatively low-level operation. Although the groups had in its possession 4000 tons of explosives, it did not have the airplanes to carry out bombing raids over Cuba, unlike groups such as Alpha 66, which were strong enough for that type of operation. Admittedly, however, Johnson said it was not known who McLaney and the others were working with. (Unfortunately, the FBI did not have

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very good coverage of organized crime activities either). He did feel that it was significant in that Oswald would probably have read about the seizures in the newspaper and Oswald's contacts after these events with Bringuier and Arnesto Rodriguez of the Berlitz School would be consistent with low-level infiltration attempts.

Johnson believes that the incident with "D" in Mexico City may have been orchestrated by Somoza to put the blame on Castro. Johnson felt satisfied with "D"'s confession to the Mexican authorities. He noted, however, that Gibson, an FPCC member, fits the description of the red-haired man described by "D".

Johnson stressed the FPCC angle as particularly interesting, especially the Canadian and Mexican aspects of the investigation. He did not elaborate on this point, except to say that members of the FPCC located in Moscow when Oswald was in Minsk, were also in Mexico in 1963. Johnson also called our attention to page 63 of Book V of the Senate Committee report regarding the "strange travels" of a Cuban-American who crossed into Mexico at Nuevo Laredo on November 23, 1963 and then returned to Cuba. This individual had a brother in the Soviet Union in 1963; he also attended a meeting of the Tampa chapter of the FPCC, which becomes more interesting since Vincent T. Lee suggested Oswald get in touch with the Tampa chapter.

Johnson only examined the FBI files on the FPCC and never looked at CIA documents on the subject. From this review,

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however, he feels that the benign picture in the Warren Report about the FPCC may have been incorrect. He feels there is reason to suspect that it had Cuban intelligence ties and it may have acted as a conduit for intelligence information. Johnson suggested a cross check on the Cuban-American and the FPCC from all possible agencies.

Johnson briefly mentioned other areas to look into, including:

- 1) The U-2 which went down into the Gulf around the 19th or 20th of November. Johnson only saw newspaper accounts of this incident.
- 2) Oswald's travel to Moscow in 1961 should be documented.
- 3) He reiterated the possible importance of the four Cuban groups previously mentioned, noting that groups such as Alpha 66 were sophisticated--perhaps sophisticated enough to send someone like Oswald to contact the Soviet Embassy or engage in intelligence operations.