



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 23, 1977

Mr. Harold Weisberg
Route 12
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Mr. Weisberg:

Re: Freedom of Information Case #720158

There is enclosed two documents reviewed and released under the FOI Act as a result of your FOI request to the CIA for documents associated with the Warren Commission.

On August 8 I sent to you a large number of those documents transferred by the CIA to State for review. At that time I promised that a letter would follow listing the documents denied and the reasons for denial. Since that time, it has been determined that in the interest of maximum disclosure all of the documents initially scheduled to be denied are now being subject to further review. The enclosed documents represent two of those documents.

You will hear from us as soon as we know the outcome of this final review of the remaining documents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "KRS", written over a horizontal line.

Kenneth R. Strawberry
Freedom of Information Staff
Bureau of Public Affairs

Enclosures

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TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE *211*

INFO : RIO DE JANEIRO, BRASILIA, RECIFE, BELEM, BELO HORIZONTE, CURITIBA, PORTO ALEGRE, SALVADOR.

FROM : AmConGen, SAO PAULO DATE: October 8, 1964

SUBJECT: Initial reaction to Warren Report skeptical

REF :

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Any discussion of SAO Paulo reaction to President Kennedy's assassination must start with one harsh fact: nothing, except possibly the passage of time, will erase the prevailing impression of some kind of monstrous plot. A few right-wing Paulistas believe that the Communists were behind it, but most of the public seems under the impression that the villains were racists, reactionary rightists, and/or the Pentagon and the CIA. Growth of this notion was already evident on the night of the assassination, when hundreds of persons flocked to the Consulate General with expressions of sympathy. A great many opined that the President had died for the cause of civil rights. Their belief was apparently the result of four factors: (a) a natural human desire to believe that every hero dies for a cause; (b) a Latin American predisposition to believe in plots; (c) the fact that the murder took place in Dallas after Stevenson's publicized experience; (d) the great publicity given locally to the civil-rights struggle.

The original impression was strengthened when Lee Oswald was killed under grotesque circumstances. The Communists and other anti-American leftists promptly did

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Contents and Classification Approved by: William L. Hight, Jr.

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their bit to exploit this made-to-order situation. Kennedy had enjoyed popularity bordering on adulation in this district, and it was obviously in the interests of anti-American forces to demonstrate that powerful elements in U.S. society refused to accept him. The groundwork had been done even before the assassination. Columns in far-leftist Ultima Hora and even some carried in liberal, reputable Folha de S. Paulo had aired "rightist plots" in the United States. Leftist columnist Newton CARLOS, for example, had begun a very interesting series "interpreting" the CIA for readers of Folha (Congen A-165 of December 13, 1963). Yellow journalists in the U.S. and elsewhere did nothing to help, and they were much quoted in wire service stories in São Paulo papers.

Very shortly after the late President's assassination, therefore, elaborate explanations of the rightist/racist plot appeared in the press. Newton Carlos got a book (A Conspiração, editor José Alvaro, Rio de Janeiro, 1964) on the stands in record time, and it has been a best-seller ever since. The details of these lurid exposés need not be repeated here, since they apparently followed the same line the world over. Indeed, though under these circumstances one hesitates to talk in terms of plots, it is not possible to ignore the remarkable international co-operation of this hue and cry. Even allowing for the efficiency of the sensational press, it was uncanny how quickly the local Ultima Hora reflected the European Communist line all through the aftermath of the Kennedy assassination.

Whatever the explanation, the fact is that the plot theory has attained the status of a myth in São Paulo. Like other myths, it will be difficult to eradicate.

Having said this, the fact remains that the Warren Report came as a solid contribution and a counteracting influence. It is not likely to compete with Newton Carlos' more timely volume as a best-seller, but many Paulistas will read summaries of it. All local papers gave important coverage to the Report's conclusions, but most remained editorially silent in obvious skepticism. The

Important conservative daily O Estado de S. Paulo was perhaps the only paper to accept the conclusions of the Report without reservations, and even the chief of Estado had previously opined over television that there was more to the assassination than met the eye. This paper devoted much of one Sunday's edition to a Portuguese translation of the Report's summary, on the same day carrying an editorial praising the Warren Commission's work. The editorial declared that the United States had proven itself a true democracy by giving the assassination a complete and honest airing. Because of Estado's generally pro-American image, other papers could have given more credible approval, but a review of the local press produces no other entirely favorable editorials. Ultima Hora's negative reaction can be discounted as being predictable, but even liberal dailies such as Folha have expressed their doubts. Notícias Populares, a pro-American, sensationalist paper founded by conservative members of the UDN party to compete with Ultima Hora, simply branded the report a whitewash (without giving any sign of having looked at it).

The Consulate General distributed its initial ten copies of the Report where they would reach the greatest numbers of influential people. They went to the Governor, the President of the State Legislative Assembly, the two leading local judges, the Rector of the University, the American Chamber of Commerce, the three papers most likely to take advantage of them, and to the USIS library. The Portuguese version carried in Estado (from text supplied by USIS) undoubtedly reached a great many persons. The more complete translation, when it comes on the market in book form, should reach many more. Soon, therefore, the Report will have been sufficiently distributed at least to make objectivity possible for those with open minds.

Niles W. Bond
Minister Consul General

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SOV AMBASSADOR IN MEXICO
EXPRESSES CONDOLENCES ON
DEATH OF KENNEDY

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IN ACCORDANCE WITH CUSTOM HERE NEARLY ALL AMBASSADORS
IN MEXICO CALLED ON ME YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AND LAST NIGHT
TO EXPRESS CONDOLENCES ON DEATH PRESIDENT KENNEDY. THE
POLE SIGNED BOOK IN EMBASSY CHANCERY LATE LAST NIGHT BUT HE AND
CZECH DID NOT CALL UNTIL THIS MORNING. RUSSIAN WAS LAST TO
CALL PRESUMABLY BECAUSE HE WAS AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS.

WHEN RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR SEMION T. BAZAROV CALLED THIS
AFTERNOON HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY COLONEL ALEXANDRE G. SIDOROV
AND FIRST SECRETARY SVIATOSLAV P. KOUZNETSOV WHICH IN ITSELF
IS UNUSUAL AS CALLS ARE USUALLY MADE BY AMBASSADORS ONLY.
ALTHOUGH THE AMBASSADOR CUSTOMARILY SPEAKS IN RATHER HALTING
SPANISH OR ENGLISH HE MADE POINT OF SAYING HE WISHED TO SPEAK
IN RUSSIAN FOR PRECISION. SPEAKING THROUGH KOUZNETSOV,
WHO TRANSLATED INTO SPANISH, HE THEN DELIVERED HIMSELF OF
ORATION. COLONEL SIDOROV GAVE APPEARANCE OF CLOSELY MONITORING
BOTH RUSSIAN AND SPANISH STATEMENTS. GIST OF REMARKS WAS THAT
DEATH OF KENNEDY WAS A GREAT BLOW TO WORLD PEACE AND
DISARMAMENT AND THAT RUSSIAN PEOPLE AND SOVIET GOVERNMENT
WHO ESTEEMED KENNEDY AS A FRIEND AND STATESMAN, SHARED
SORROW OF UNITED STATES.

I HAD IMPRESSION THEY HAD CAREFULLY REHEARSED THE CALL
IN ADVANCE AND WISHED TO SAY NOTHING EXCEPT THAT HAD BEEN
REHEARSED.

Expressed condolences on death of
Pres. Kennedy. 4

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