

III. Transcript of an interview of Fidel Castro Ruz on April 3, 1978 by Congressmen Louis Stokes, Richardson Preyer, and Christopher Dodd, Chief Counsel G. Robert Blakey, Deputy Chief Counsel Gary T. Cornwell, and Researcher Edwin Juan Lopez Soto

several guns like that and it could be that we learned almost everything that could be learned about telescopic pistols, even the differences between different pistols; a normal pistol with a trigger, an automatic pistol and a telescopic (rifle). It is much more practical if you use a normal sight . . . when you try to focus a moving target and you (do it) more accurately .. with that kind than with a telescopic sight. A telescopic sight view gun should be used against a fixed target -- not a moving one -- It is very difficult. And, I tell you it seemed very strange that he used that weapon and that those shots could have been made with that kind of weapon. Because, when you shoot the first charge you have to take the weapon away from your face to (focus) it again, to try to find the object again..the target..and you lose time -- it is quite difficult. I don't know whether later things were technical proof - technical tests were made to see whether - just a normal shooter at that distance and at that speed of the car could have (accurately made such shots). That was something else that was very suspicious to me. But, as far as we are concerned, what was most strange was Oswald's attempt to visit Cuba.

Stokes: Realizing, Mr. President, the enormity of the appearance of Oswald at your Embassy and realizing the significance that it had relative to the assassination itself, was it

that participated in some way in the investigation conducted by the Warren Commission. And then lastly, our mandate is to make recommendations to the United States Congress based upon our findings as a result of the total investigation. So we have approached the investigation in that way -- hoping that we will be able to ascertain the truth of these facts and then be able to put to bed the theories, the rumors, the speculation that presently exists around the assassination of President Kennedy.

Castro: Have you had a broad access to all the possible sources of information?

Stokes: Yes, we have. If you have reference to our own agencies and our own files, the answer is yes, we have.

Castro: Are you optimistic about the fact that you'll be able to reach a sound conclusion on this problem? Are you optimistic about it?

Stokes: We are optimistic that even though the job is an awesome responsibility for the eleven men and one woman who are members of this Committee, along with the staff of 115 people, all of whom we feel are dedicated to this task, our final report will be one that will be a highly professional and competent job.

Castro: Any other question that you would like to raise I would be pleased to answer.

Stokes: Could we for a moment, Mr. President, go back to the moment you learned about Lee Harvey Oswald having been at your Embassy in Mexico City? Do you recall a speech that you made on the 23rd of November?

that interview in which he was going to be given the weapon to kill me and that was published by the Senate Committee. He never made reference to that. That person is alive because I had to request some leniency. I mean, because his crime was very serious. It was a tremendous betrayal. It was treason, and at that time to participate in such an action was very severely sanctioned. And, following a tradition with individuals that had participated in the revolution, whenever it has been possible to prevent drastic measures, we have done so. This gentleman had been a revolutionary leader. He had been a good revolutionary fighter, and the public opinion was very irritated about it. His crime was really very serious. I wrote a letter to the Cuban Tribunal morally condemning him (but asking for leniency). I did it for the public opinion....That is Cubela's case. We learned that later when the Senate Committee Report appeared. But, all these elements made us think about the advisability of organizing some investigation on our account. We had hoped that being in contact with your Committee could give us some elements of judgment for our own information. But, as far as I know, you don't contribute many elements of judgment because -- as I have been told -- you cannot make use of most of the information you possess.

I have been told that one of our hopes was to receive some information. We are giving as much information as we have and we are receiving nothing.

Stokes: One thing I would like to say and I think you ought to know is that many Americans are ashamed of the CIA and the degrading attempts that they've made on your life. And, that's something that disturbs many, many decent Americans and I think you ought to know that.

Mr. President, with your permission I'd like to defer to my other colleagues, if they have any questions, if that is agreeable to you.

Castro: Yes, please.

Stokes: Mr. Preyer?

Preyer: Mr. President, you mentioned that you believe that you could transfer power of chains of government without killing the head of the government. That is the tradition of our country also. I speak personally and not for our government, but I join Chairman Stokes in saying that when I read about AMLASH, Cubela and the Church Committee reports I was shocked and outraged. I am confident that is the overwhelming reaction of the American people. I am convinced that the President did not know about that; the head of the CIA, John McCone, did not know of that; or our other high officials; and that this was an aberration of a small group and that it would have

to us which we cannot release. But in the final analysis, the full report will make available much information of interest to you and may answer many of the rumors. In the meantime, one reason we press so hard for information is that this is the last opportunity that will probably be made in our country to reach a final answer. The last chance where an official body of Congress -- an official governmental body -- will make a judgment on this question.

That is why we hope that any information that bears on this subject that may come up in the next few months and any effort that could be made, even strenuous effort, would be justified because this opportunity may not come again. And I hope very much that we will be able to give clear answers to the questions. Your help will assist very much.

Castro: I think you are right in what you are saying. When I spoke about the hope of obtaining some information, it was not but a hope. It is absolutely our curiosity, you know. But, it is absolutely evident that we have the duty of handing over all the information we may gather. We are very much interested in having Kennedy's assassination clarified because in one way or the other attempts have been made to try to have Cuba involved in it. We have our conscience clear.

normal life. We have taken many measures in all these years preventing attempts with different kinds of explosives and weapons, attempts with poison, and actually we are not saying all. I will tell you something. I would even say that I underestimated the CIA somewhat because I thought them capable of many things, but when I read the Senate Committee Report, I confess that I had not thought so much. Because, all that from bacterias, viruses, poisons, a shell with explosives, I don't know how many tremendous things. But it was not only that. I want you to know that if we would have been careless, they would have brought a microphone and put it over there in one of the ashtrays and one mike over there in that seat and everything. There were not only subversive activities, but also espionage. There were many activities related to espionage. I remember that around the day in which the sabotage against our plane took place, the CIA asked in a question, to one of their agents here, whether I was going to travel to Africa, whether he could find out what place I was going to visit, what means of transportation I was going to use, I mean, a whole set of investigation which was not political, but rather that could be used for anything else. Now, going back to this topic, one of the things I've gone into recently with some people, is why Cuba - it was really something inconceivable - could have the idea of killing the President?

people are concerned about our efforts. I said today in one of our meetings that I strongly suspected that your grandchildren and my grandchildren will be reading books about the assassination, just as we read them today about the assassination of Lincoln, another historical figure that had been assassinated, and where the suspicion of conspiracy has existed. I think we would be fooling ourselves if we tried to suggest that at the conclusion of our hearings we were going to end once and for all, all of the speculation for all time. I don't think that is possible.

But, what we are going to try and do, and I think that what we have done successfully over the past year and a half, is to approach this case with an open mind and not prejudge the case. And, the temptations are great to do that. For every day we almost see a new theory. But, we are determined to proceed through this process listening to all sides and then using the evidence that we are able to collect, to reach as definitely as we can, regarding those points that have been nagging at the consciences and minds of the people all across the earth. Two other points: One is that we intend not only to publish our hearings and the conclusion that we reach. We also intend to use every available means of communication in the United States, hopefully television, radio, to conduct open public hearings, not only showing our conclusions, but how we arrived at

those conclusions. We suspect that many, many people do not want to read a boring report, but would rather be better informed by radio and television and newspapers. We intend to hide nothing, to release all information without any fear whatsoever as to where that information leads or what our conclusions would be. I think, I know I can speak for myself, and I'm sure I can speak for everyone else on this Committee. I wouldn't serve on this Committee if I didn't think in the end that I could say to my constituents that I had done an honest and thorough job and that I wasn't hiding anything from them. And, my last point is, Mr. President, that had some of your government officials not mentioned it today, we would have, but it was very encouraging to hear it come from them, that they would like to continue to keep the lines of communication open between themselves, your government and our Committee. And, as that old Chinese proverb goes - a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. And I think this is a good beginning and I want to just say here and now that I have been deeply impressed by your statements. I find your logic compelling and I guarantee you that we will do the very best job we can, including the final report.

Castro: How many legislators do you have on this Committee?

Stokes: There are twelve in all, one lady and eleven men.

cause he testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee. As I indicated to some of the members of your staff, Mr. Giancana was responsible for the death of hundreds of people in Chicago, and the remarkable thing is not that he died then, but that he had not been killed much earlier.

Stokes: The last gentleman here, Mr. President, is Gary Cornwell. Gary is the Deputy Chief Counsel for the Kennedy Subcommittee and he would have direct responsibility in terms of the final work product related to the Kennedy investigation. I separate out the Kennedy assassination because as you know we are investigating also the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. Two murder investigations are going at the same time

Castro: The five million dollars is for both?

Blakey: You ought to also know, Mr. President, that this is the budget attributable to the Committee itself. In fact, the United States Senate, particularly the people who were responsible for the Church Committee investigation, have been helping this Committee. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has a relatively large staff devoted to getting their files made available to us. We have actually received cooperation from the Central Intelligence Agency. Some members of the staff would say not as fast and as full as we might like, but the final report is not in. The police departments in Dallas