

INSIDE WASHINGTON

FBI Still Probes Oswald Letter

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Editor's Note: The following views are those of the authors and are presented here to give readers a variety of viewpoints. The Tribune's opinions are expressed only in editorials.

Four years after the assassination of President Kennedy, the FBI is still investigating a mystery involving the contents of the last letter Lee Harvey Oswald wrote before the Dallas tragedy.

The correspondence, intercepted and read by the FBI before it arrived at its destination, was mailed to the Soviet Embassy here on Nov. 12, 1963—or 10 days before the assassination.

Written as a request for a Soviet visa, the letter contained a paragraph referring to the highly secret recall of a Cuban official in the Mexico City embassy days after Oswald had visited there and returned to Dallas.

The baffling question the FBI is still trying to answer is:

How did Oswald learn about this official's unannounced recall?

The FBI has concluded the information would have had to come to Oswald from one of three sources:

(1) An informant in the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City who contacted Oswald after he returned to the U.S.; (2) the Central Intelligence Agency, or (3) the KGB, the Soviet secret police.

Significantly, the FBI inquiry ascertained that CIA and KGB operators in Mexico City learned of the official's

recall at approximately the same time and only a week before Oswald wrote his letter, containing the following paragraph:

"Of course the Soviet Embassy was not at fault, they were, as I say unprepared, the Cuban Consul was guilty of a gross breach of regulations, I am glad he has since been replaced."

According to the FBI's findings, there was absolutely no way Oswald could have obtained this information during his September visit to Mexico City, since the secret recall orders from Havana were not transmitted until after he had returned to Dallas.

During its investigation of the Kennedy assassination, the Warren Commission directed one inquiry to the CIA to determine where Oswald might have obtained the information. It produced negative results.

The CIA's memorandum to the commission, now declassified and on file in the National Archives, states:

"We surmise that the reference in Oswald's 9 November letter to a man who has since been replaced must refer to Cuban Consul Eusebio Azque, who left Mexico for Cuba on permanent transfer on 18 November, 1963, four days before the assassination.

"Azque was scheduled to leave in October but did not leave until 18 November. We do not know who might have told Oswald that Azque was to be replaced."

After receiving this reply

from the CIA, the Warren Commission's staff made no further inquiry on the Azque reference, but centered their probe on the circumstances under which the letter was prepared and later discovered.

One witness, who appeared in recent weeks before Garrison's grand jury probe of the Kennedy assassination, has reported to a government agency that he was quizzed extensively about Oswald's letter. Several questions, he said, sought information designed to link Oswald with several Cubans reputedly employed by the CIA.

Senate Democratic Whip Russell Long, La., a close friend of the New Orleans district attorney, is saying privately Garrison told him the "Oswald letter is a very important part of my investigation."

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