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Defector Told CIA in 1964 Of Oswald-Cuban Contacts

By David C. Martin
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A Cuban defector told the Central Intelligence Agency in 1964 that Lee Harvey Oswald may have been in contact with Cuban intelligence agents seven weeks before he killed President Kennedy, newly released documents show.

The defector, described as "a well-placed individual who has been . . . in contact with . . . officers of the Cuban Directorate General of Intelligence," also told the CIA that the DGI took extraordinary security precautions immediately after the Kennedy slaying, according to the documents.

The information was relayed to the Warren Commission, which "saw no need to pursue this angle any further," a June, 1964, CIA memo says. No mention of the defector or his information appears in the commission's report, which concluded that there was no evidence of a foreign or domestic conspiracy behind the Kennedy assassination.

Memos regarding the Cuban defector were among some 1,500 pages of CIA documents released to the Associated Press. Also included is a 1975 CIA memo stating that the Warren Commission report should have given more credence to the possibility of a foreign

conspiracy in light of promising leads that were not pursued.

The documents originally were provided to the Rockefeller commission on the CIA and have since been turned over to the Senate intelligence committee, where a subcommittee headed by Sen. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.) is investigating the Kennedy assassination. Schweiker has predicted that the Warren report will "collapse like a house of cards."

The memos regarding the Cuban defector quote him as saying "I have no personal knowledge of Lee Harvey Oswald or his activities and I do not know that Oswald was an agent . . . of the Cuban government."

The first mention of the defector appears in a May 5, 1964, internal CIA memo in which he is quoted as saying that Oswald "was in contact" with three Cuban agents "before, during and after his visits to the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico City in late September and early October, 1963. A subsequent May 8 memo quotes the source as saying that "I believe" Oswald was

in contact with the Cuban agents.

The memos consistently quote the defector as saying that "after the news of the assassination of President Kennedy reached the DGI, orders were issued for all offices of the DGI . . . to sort and package all documents according to whether they were 'muy secreto' (very secret), 'secreto' (secret), or 'importante' (important). The material, once packaged, was to be held pending further instructions. All travel by DGI officers and all DGI (mail) pouches were suspended temporarily."

According to the memos, the defector did not know the reason for these security measures but believed they were taken "because of the possibility that the United States might take some type of action against Cuba and the DGI offices."

Other memos show that Cuban reaction to the Kennedy slaying was of intense interest to the CIA. All of Cuban Premier Fidel Castro's public statements were analyzed to determine if he possessed any knowledge about the killing that had not been made public.