

III. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE ASSASSINATION: NOVEMBER 22, 1963 TO JANUARY 1, 1964

This section of the Report discusses the performance of the FBI and the CIA during the weeks immediately following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The performance of these agencies should not be evaluated in isolation. Senior government officials, both within the agencies and outside them, wanted the investigation completed promptly and all conspiracy rumors dispelled. For example, only three days after the assassination, Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach wrote Presidential Assistant Bill Moyers:

It is important that all of the facts surrounding President Kennedy's assassination be made public in a way which will satisfy people in the United States and abroad that all the facts have been told and that a statement to this effect be made now.

1. The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and that the evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial.

2. Speculation about Oswald's motivation ought to be cut off, and we should have some basis for rebutting thought that this was a Communist conspiracy or (as the Iron Curtain press is saying) a right-wing conspiracy to blame it on the Communists.¹

On November 29, 1963, President Johnson told Director Hoover that, although he wanted to "get by" on just the FBI report, the only way to stop the "rash of investigations" was to appoint a high-level committee to evaluate that report.² On December 9, 1963, Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach wrote each member of the Warren Commission recommending that the Commission immediately issue a press release stating that the FBI report clearly showed there was no international conspiracy, and that Oswald was a loner.³

A. *The CIA Response*

This section deals with the CIA's immediate response in investigating the assassination. It discusses what information the CIA received alleging Cuban involvement in the assassination, and the steps taken by the Agency to investigate those allegations.

¹ Memorandum from Nicholas deB. Katzenbach to Bill Moyers, 11/26/63.

² Memorandum from Hoover to Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, Sullivan, DeLoach, and Rosen, 11/29/63.

³ Memorandum from DeLoach to Tolson, 12/12/63. No such release was issued.

Since Oswald had come to the attention of the CIA in October and November 1963, the Agency needed no orders to begin an investigation of the assassination. On November 8, the CIA received an FBI report dated October 31, 1963, discussing the Bureau's investigation of Oswald's activities in New Orleans. On November 15, that report was forwarded to SAS Counterintelligence, the CIA section specializing in Cuban affairs. The routing slip on the report indicates it was sent to the Counterintelligence Division of the CIA on November 22.⁴ The Chief of SAS Counterintelligence recalled that immediately after the assassination, Director McCone requested all Agency material on Oswald. The Chief testified that he probably reported seeing a recent FBI report on Oswald, but he could not remember whether SAS had routed the report to the Counterintelligence Division before or after the assassination.⁵

The CIA Mexico Station also realized that Lee Harvey Oswald had come to its attention in early October and cabled CIA Headquarters at 5:00 p.m. on the afternoon of the assassination.⁶ Other CIA stations and overseas elements of the State Department and Defense Department soon began reporting any information they received which might be relevant to the assassination.

For the first twenty-four hours after the assassination, the CIA's attention focused primarily on Oswald's September 27, 1963, visit to Mexico City. CIA Headquarters wanted all relevant information developed by its Mexico Station in order to begin its analysis of the information. On the morning of November 23, Director McCone met with President Johnson and his national security advisor, McGeorge Bundy, to brief them on the information CIA Headquarters had received from its Mexico Station. McCone's memorandum for the record of that meeting contains the essential information extracted from the Mexico Station's cable which had been received by that time.⁷

According to the 1967 Inspector General Report, CIA Headquarters cabled the AMLASH case officer on the morning of November 23, and ordered him to break contact with AMLASH due to the President's assassination and to return to Headquarters.⁸ Neither those who prepared the I.G. Report, nor current CIA officials could locate a copy of that cable. The case officer testified he recalled receiving such a cable, but could not recall whether it made specific mention of the President's assassination as the reason for breaking contact with AMLASH and returning.⁹ He did connect that cable's instructions with the assassination.¹⁰

⁴ Moreover, on September 16, 1963, the CIA had asked the FBI to obtain information on the Fair Play for Cuba Committee which the Agency could use in a propaganda campaign. In acquiring the information, the FBI obtained a copy of one of Oswald's letters to FPCC headquarters.

⁵ Chief, SAS/CI, 5/10/76, pp. 6-7.

⁶ All times have been converted to Eastern Standard Time. The assassination occurred at 1:30 E.S.T.

⁷ On March 8, 1976, Walter Elder, DCI McCone's executive officer gave the Committee staff access to Mr. McCone's calendar and memoranda from this time period. The following discussion is based, in part, on these records.

⁸ I.G. Report, p. 94.

⁹ Case Officer, 2/11/76, p. 53.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

That same morning, CIA personnel on the Counterintelligence staff who were responsible for Soviet intelligence prepared a memorandum suggesting the possibility that Oswald's contacts in Mexico City with Soviet personnel might have sinister implications.¹¹ The memorandum also stated that the essential information was transmitted to the agency's FBI liaison by telephone at 10:30 a.m. that morning.

Sometime on November 23, Deputy Director for Plans Richard Helms called a meeting to outline responsibility for the CIA investigation of the assassination. At that meeting Helms informed his Deputy, Thomas Karamessines, and Chief of Counterintelligence James Angleton, that a desk officer in the Western Hemisphere Division would be in charge of the CIA investigation. This desk officer had professional expertise in conducting counterintelligence investigations for the Agency. Helms instructed Karamessines and Angleton to provide the desk officer full cooperation and access to all information he requested.¹² Karamessines testified he could not recall the desk officer being assigned responsibility for the investigation.¹³

At 5:00 p.m. CIA Headquarters received a cable from the Mexico Station stating that the Mexican police were going to arrest Sylvia Duran, a Mexican national employed by the Cuban consulate who was believed to have talked to Oswald when he visited the consulate in September.¹⁴ Headquarters personnel telephoned the Mexico Station and asked them to stop the planned arrest.¹⁵ The Mexico Station said that the arrest could not be stopped.¹⁶

After learning the arrest could not be prevented, Karamessines cabled the Mexico Station that the arrest "could jeopardize U.S. freedom of action on the whole question of Cuban responsibility."¹⁷ The desk officer could not recall that cable or explain the reasons for transmitting such a message.¹⁸ Karamessines could not recall preparing the cable or his reasons for issuing such a message. He speculated that the CIA feared the Cubans were responsible, and that Duran might reveal this during an interrogation. He further speculated that if Duran did possess such information, the CIA and the U.S. Government would need time to react before it came to the attention of the public.¹⁹

Later that evening, the AMLASH case officer arrived in Washington. The case officer cannot recall whether he reported to Headquarters that evening but he was in his office the next morning, Sunday, Novem-

¹¹ Memorandum from CI staff to the Director, 11/23/63. The thesis of the memorandum was disproved by later investigation; however, it reflects the fact that at least some officials in the CIA were concerned with the possibility of a conspiracy.

¹² Western Hemisphere Division Desk Officer, 5/7/76, p. 7. (Referred to hereinafter as the Desk Officer.)

¹³ Karamessines, 4/18/76, p. 10.

¹⁴ Memorandum for the Record by Desk Officer, 11/23/63.

¹⁵ Administrative Sheet, Mexico Station Cable, 11/23/63.

¹⁶ Memorandum for the Record by Desk Officer, 11/23/63.

¹⁷ CIA Cable from CIA Headquarters to Mexico Station, 11/23/63.

¹⁸ Desk Officer, 5/7/76, p. 52.

¹⁹ Karamessines, 4/18/76, pp. 26-27.

ber 24.²⁰ Early that morning, the 24th the Mexico Station cabled its response to a Headquarters request for the names of all known contacts of certain Soviet personnel in Mexico City. The purpose of obtaining these names was to determine the significance of Oswald's contact with the Soviets and to assess their activities. AMLASH's real name was included in the list of names on the Mexico Station cable.²¹

Karamessines was asked what would have been done with this cable.

Q. The message reporting back on this gave all contacts, known contacts that these individuals had in Mexico City. And what is the next step in your process?

A. You check these names out to see whether your files give any evidence of suspicious activity. And if they don't, if they simply don't indicate any suspicious activity, that would be the end of it. If it does indicate suspicious activity, then you would follow from there, and you would pass this information on to other interested parties within the Agency or within the Government, and you would carry on from there and investigate further.

Q. That is the point I am getting to . . . Is it routine standard operating procedure to check the CI [counterintelligence] file on that named individual?

A. Yes, unless the desk officer that receives it happens to know who that fellow is and doesn't have to check. And that happens quite frequently.²²

The Executive Officer in the Special Affairs Section was asked what would happen if those at the CIA investigating the assassination had requested a name trace on AMLASH.

A. The name trace would have given whatever we knew about the individual except our operational contacts with him. It would be biographic information.

Q. Well, if the Counterintelligence Division asked for information on AMLASH, even if they were furnished biographical information, it would not contain the fact that he was involved in some assassination plot.

A. That's correct. That would normally go to the case officer concerned, who would be alerted by the name tracers that somebody had asked for AMLASH.

Q. And what would the case officer have done in that case?

A. Well, in this case I'm sure he would have gone and talked to Mr. Fitzgerald about it.

Q. Do you know whether the case officer did?

A. I don't know, no.

Q. So in other words, the fact that the CIA was involved with AMLASH . . . would normally have been kept from the CI, counterintelligence investigators.

A. It would have been held back from the ordinary case officer, yes. Whether it would have been held back from the

²⁰ AMLASH Case Officer, 2/11/76, pp. 54-55. (Referred to hereinafter as the Case Officer.)

²¹ Cable from Mexico Station to CIA Headquarters, 11/24/63.

²² Karamessines, 4/18/76, pp. 24-25.

men in charge. I don't know. That would have been up to the Chief of SAS, in this case, Fitzgerald and the DDP.²³

Thus, early in the morning of November 24, the CIA officials investigating the assassination had come across AMLASH's name. Had routine procedure been followed, that name would have been checked in Agency files.²⁴ Operational information, i.e., details of CIA plots with AMLASH to assassinate Castro, would not have been routinely provided. The decision to provide such information would have been made by Fitzgerald or Helms. The AMLASH Case Officer can recall no discussion about connections between AMLASH and the assassination of President Kennedy.²⁵

CIA files on its investigation of the President's assassination contain no evidence that such information was provided. The Desk Officer who coordinated the CIA investigation of the assassination testified he was not then aware of any assassination plots and certainly was not then aware of the AMLASH plot.

Q. Did you know that on November 22, 1963, about the time Kennedy was assassinated, a CIA case officer was passing a poison pen, offering a poison pen to a high-level Cuban to use to assassinate Castro?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Would you have drawn a link in your mind between that and the Kennedy assassination?

A. I certainly think that that would have become an absolutely vital factor in analyzing the events surrounding the Kennedy assassination.²⁶

On November 24, at 10 a.m., Director McCone met with the President and briefed him about CIA operational plans against Cuba. That briefing could not have included a discussion of AMLASH since McCone testified that he was not aware of the AMLASH assassination effort.²⁷

On November 25 at 12:00 p.m., the Mexico Station dispatched a cable reminding Headquarters of Castro's September 7, 1963, statement threatening U.S. leaders.²⁸

The Case Officer's "contact report" on the November 22 meeting with AMLASH bears the date November 25. He testified it was probably prepared on either November 24 or 25.²⁹ The report does not note that the poison pen was offered to AMLASH although it does state that AMLASH was told he would receive explosives and rifles with telescopic sights. The Case Officer testified the contact report does not discuss the poison pen because Fitzgerald ordered him to omit that matter.³⁰ He probably showed the report to Fitzgerald on the

²³ Executive Officer, 5/10/76, pp. 36-37.

²⁴ No document in the AMLASH file mentioned the poison pen, so even access to his file would not have given a person knowledge of this key fact.

²⁵ Case Officer, 2/11/76, pp. 59, 60.

²⁶ Desk Officer, 5/7/76, pp. 31, 32.

²⁷ McCone testimony, 6/6/76, p. 59.

²⁸ Cable from Mexico Station to CIA Headquarters, 11/25/63.

²⁹ Case Officer, 2/11/76, p. 61.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

same day, but recalls no discussion with Fitzgerald about a possible connection between the AMLASH operation and President Kennedy's assassination.³¹ The Case Officer also stated that there was no reason to make such a connection and he certainly made no such connection in his mind.³² When asked why he did not associate President Kennedy's assassination by a pro-Castro activist with his own involvement in the AMLASH operation, the Case Officer stated he does not know to this day that Oswald had any pro-Castro leanings.³³

The case officer said he was reassigned shortly after returning to Headquarters. He testified that he was never involved in discussions at the CIA about possible connections between his November 22 meeting with AMLASH and President Kennedy's assassination.³⁴

At noon on November 25, "D," a Latin American, appeared at the American Embassy in Mexico City.³⁵ He told Embassy personnel that he was in the Cuban consulate on September 17 and saw Cubans who discussed assassination pay Oswald a sum of money. He later repeated his story to the CIA Mexico Station Chief. The CIA and the Warren Commission later concluded that the story was a fabrication, but the Agency was clearly concerned with "D's" story at the time.³⁶

On the evening of November 25, a senior American Embassy official in Mexico City informed a senior Mexican government official of the known facts about Oswald's visit to Mexico City.³⁷ This memorandum concludes by posing questions designed to determine whether Oswald's visit to Mexico City was part of a pre-conceived plan to assassinate the President and whether the Cubans were involved in such a plan.

On November 26, Director McCone again met with President Johnson, who told him that the FBI had responsibility for investigating the President's death and directed him to make CIA resources available to assist the Bureau. The Desk Officer testified that there was a feeling in the CIA that the Bureau may have been derelict in its handling of Oswald before the assassination, and that the CIA investigative efforts should be as independent as possible of the FBI's.³⁸

Later in that day, the Mexico Station cabled Headquarters on the details of its interrogation of "D".³⁹ It also reported other information from a sensitive and reliable source which tended to confirm "D's" story that Oswald may have been paid by the Cubans to assassinate President Kennedy. This report has never been satisfactorily explained, although it was made available to the Warren Commission

³¹ Case Officer, 7/29/75, pp. 115-116; Case Officer, 2/11/76, pp. 59-60.

³² Case Officer, 7/29/75, pp. 115-116.

³³ Case Officer, 2/11/76, p. 91.

³⁴ Case Officer, 7/29/75, p. 115; Case Officer, 2/11/76, p. 76.

³⁵ This incident is discussed in the Warren Report, pp. 308, 309; Cable from Mexico Station to CIA Headquarters, 11/25/63.

³⁶ "D" later admitted that the story about Oswald had been fabricated. (Cable from Mexico City to CIA Headquarters, 11/30/63.) It had also been determined by the FBI that Oswald probably was in New Orleans on September 17. (Cable from CIA Headquarters to Mexico Station, 11/28/63.)

³⁷ Memorandum, 11/25/63.

³⁸ Desk officer, 5/7/76, pp. 62, 63.

³⁹ Cable from Mexico Station to CIA Headquarters, 11/26/63.

staff. In any event, these reports certainly must have fueled suspicions of Cuban involvement in the assassination. Based on the evidence it reviewed, the Warren Commission later determined that "D's" story was a fabrication.

The American Ambassador in Mexico later sent a cable to the State Department through CIA channels. In that cable he gave his opinion that the Cubans were involved in the assassination, and recommended certain investigative steps which should be taken in Mexico.⁴⁰

On the same day, a cable listing DDP Helms as the releasing officer was dispatched to CIA stations in Europe and Canada. This cable stated that stations should carefully examine material obtained from a specified sensitive and reliable source, "because of obvious significance of any scrap information which bears on [the] assassination issue."⁴¹ The Desk Officer in charge of the CIA investigation was unaware that such a message had been sent out and was at the time unaware of the sensitive and reliable source mentioned.⁴²

On November 27, a European Station cabled information to Headquarters which had been obtained through the use of this sensitive and reliable source. That information indicated that AMLASH was indiscreet in his conversations.⁴³ This cable does not reference any Headquarters' cable, as station cables often do, but, since it reports information obtained through the use of the sensitive and reliable source which had been specified in the November 26 cable which Helms released, it appears likely that it was indeed a response to the Helms request. The cable from the European Station was placed in the AMLASH file but was not disseminated to those investigating the assassination.

By November 27, the Mexico Station and CIA Headquarters were also beginning to question the accuracy of "D's" story. The cables between the Mexico Station and Headquarters indicate the possibility that the story was a fabrication. Nevertheless, on November 28, Headquarters cabled a reminder to the Mexico Station to "follow all leads." The Station was instructed to continue investigating the possibility of Cuban or Soviet involvement, because Headquarters had not excluded the possibility that other persons were involved with Oswald.⁴⁴

Later that day Headquarters learned that Mexican authorities planned to arrest Sylvia Duran again and warned the station that the Mexicans must take responsibility for the arrest. After learning that the U.S. Ambassador was continuing to press for a vigorous investigation into Cuban involvement, Headquarters also warned the Station Chief that the Ambassador was pushing the case too hard and his proposals could lead to a "flap" with the Cubans.⁴⁵ Finally, the Agency concluded that "D's" story was a fabrication and terminated its interest in him.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Cable from Mexico Station to CIA Headquarters, 11/26/63.

⁴¹ Cable from CIA Headquarters to various European and Canadian stations, 11/26/63. Precise text of this cable paraphrased to protect sensitive intelligence sources and methods.

⁴² Desk Officer, 5/7/76, pp. 27-28.

⁴³ Cable from European station to CIA Headquarters, 11/27/63.

⁴⁴ A cable from CIA Headquarters to Mexico Station, 11/28/63.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; 11/28/63.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

On November 30, Director McCone met with the President at 11 a.m. The meeting lasted for an hour and a half. McCone's memorandum for record states that the President "again" raised the question of Cuba and that McCone pointed out speeches made by President Kennedy on September 5, September 13, and November 20, 1962.⁴⁸ The memorandum also refers to a discussion of a Cuban arms cache which had been discovered in Venezuela. While there was a discussion of the allegations made by "D" the memorandum records no action was required on the "Oswald situation."⁴⁹

On December 1, McCone met with the President and Bundy. McCone's memorandum of the meeting indicates they again discussed "D's" story. Later that day, Headquarters cabled the Mexico Station and stated that the White House had been told the story was a fabrication.

Headquarters also informed the Station that it had received information from a sensitive source that a Cubana airlines flight to Havana had been delayed in Mexico City from 6 p.m. until 11 p.m. E.S.T. on the day of the assassination, to await an unidentified passenger who arrived in a twin-engine aircraft and boarded the Cubana aircraft without going through customs.⁵⁰ According to the CIA information, the unidentified passenger rode in the cockpit on the flight to Havana. This cable was found in the Mexico Station file, but the Agency has no record of any follow-up action on the report.⁵¹ The FAA was contacted by the Select Committee staff in order to determine the origins of the twin-engine aircraft, but indicated it would have no records, such as flight plans, from that time period.

On December 2, McCone met with the President and Bundy at 10 a.m. Later that day, the Mexico Station reported it had reason to doubt its earlier conclusion that "D" was fabricating. At 3 p.m. that afternoon, Director McCone's calendar reveals he attended a meeting on Cuba in the CIA conference room.

On December 3, CIA Headquarters first received information from the Mexico Station on a Cuban—American. According to Passport Office records, his file there was checked on December 4 by a representative of the CIA. This CIA representative testified that he could not recall such a check or the report.⁵²

The CIA received its first report from a Cuban agent on December 4. This agent reported that he believed he had met Oswald in Cuba, Mexico or the United States, since his face seemed familiar. He also reiterated his belief that the Cuban government employed assassins and had carried out at least one assassination in Mexico.⁵³

On December 5, the Mexico Station cabled that a source saw the Cuban—American board a flight from Mexico City to Havana reported that he "looked suspicious." It also reported what was then known about his itinerary.⁵⁴ On December 8, CIA Headquarters cabled

⁴⁸ Memorandum for the Record by Director McCone, 12/2/63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Cable from CIA Headquarters to Mexico Station, 12/1/63.

⁵¹ Letter from CIA to Senate Select Committee, 2/4/76.

⁵² CIA Liaison Officer testimony, 5/7/76, p. 9.

⁵³ Cable from Mexico Station to CIA Headquarters, 12/4/63.

⁵⁴ CIA Cable from Mexico to Headquarters, 12/5/63.

its Florida Station ordering it to halt two planned operations against Cuba pending a high-level policy review.⁵⁵ One of these operations was the delivery of rifles, telescopic sights, and explosives to AMLASH.

A December 9 memorandum to Director McCone discusses U.S. operations against Cuba. Although the memorandum did mention a plot for a coup in Cuba, it does not refer to the AMLASH operation. It noted that:

. . . These non-Communist anti-Castro dissident Cubans . . . assert that they must have solemn assurances from high level U.S. spokesman, especially the President, that the United States will exert its decisive influence during and immediately after the coup to prevent their personal liquidation and a political regression.

2. CIA has attempted in a general and very limited manner to provide these assurances, but it remains for the President and other Administration spokesman to instill a genuine sense of U.S. commitment to our efforts.⁵⁶

On December 10, Director McCone met with CIA staff in the Agency conference room at noon to discuss Cuba. On December 12 the Mexico Station reported that the FBI was attempting to complete the Mexico aspects of the case.⁵⁷

The desk officer in charge of the investigation recalled sometime in the latter part of December he completed and submitted a brief report on his investigation which was then taken to the President.⁵⁸ After he prepared the report, he was given an opportunity to review the FBI report on its part of the investigation. The desk officer testified that in reviewing the Bureau's report he learned many new facts which he felt were significant but which had not been known to him during his investigation.⁵⁹ As an example, he testified that until reading the FBI report, he had not known that Oswald allegedly shot at General Walker in April 1963.⁶⁰

The desk officer recalled a meeting in late December 1963 with Helms, Karamessines, Angleton and others where the CIA report was discussed. According to the desk officer, Angleton suggested that his own Counterintelligence Division take over the investigation and Helms acceded to this suggestion.⁶¹ According to one of Angleton's subordinates, he did not become involved with the investigation until January 23, 1964, when the Warren Commission began requesting information from the CIA, at which time Angleton designated him the "point of record" for all matters related to the assassination and the Warren Commission.⁶²

⁵⁵ Cable from CIA Headquarters to JMWAVE Station, 12/8/63.

⁵⁶ Memorandum for the DCI, "Policy Considerations for Cuba and Latin America," 12/9/63.

⁵⁷ Cable from Mexico Station to CIA Headquarters, 12/12/63.

⁵⁸ Desk Officer, 5/7/76, pp. 6-9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Desk Officer, 5/7/76, pp. 60, 61.

Mr. Karamessines could recall no meetings on the structure of the CIA's investigation. (Karamessines, 4/18/76, p. 41.)

⁶² Staff summary of interview of CIA analyst, 3/15/76.

B. The FBI Response

The FBI investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy was a massive effort. Literally thousands of leads were followed in the field by hundreds of agents, many of whom worked around the clock during the days immediately following the assassination. The FBI files produced by this investigation are in excess of five hundred and ninety volumes.

Two divisions at FBI headquarters supervised the assassination investigation. Because the Bureau's jurisdiction was originally predicated upon statutes which made it a crime to assault a Federal officer, primary responsibility for the investigation was assumed by the General Investigative Division, which regularly supervised those kinds of criminal investigations. Certain responsibilities for the investigation were assumed by the Domestic Intelligence Division which had conducted a security investigation of Oswald in connection with his trip to the Soviet Union and activities on behalf of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

Although the Domestic Intelligence Division did participate in the Bureau's inquiry, the case was handled primarily as a traditional criminal investigation. Lee Harvey Oswald was charged with the murder of the President and, as the identified subject of a criminal case, became the focus of the Bureau's investigation. The investigation collected evidence on Oswald's background, activities, and contacts, and specific data relative to the *act* of the assassination itself. The investigation thus relied heavily upon interviews of eyewitnesses, analyses of physical evidence, and ballistic tests. The Committee has found no evidence that the Bureau ever conducted a wide-ranging investigation which explored larger questions, such as possible foreign involvement in the assassination.

1. The Investigative Attitude of Senior FBI Officials

Almost immediately after the assassination, Director Hoover, the Justice Department and the White House "exerted pressure" on senior Bureau officials to complete their investigation and issue a factual report supporting the conclusion that Oswald was the lone assassin. Thus, it is not surprising that, from its inception, the assassination investigation focused almost exclusively on Lee Harvey Oswald.

On November 23, 1963, J. Edgar Hoover forwarded an FBI memorandum to President Johnson which detailed the results of the Bureau's preliminary "inquiry into the assassination" and "background information relative to Lee Harvey Oswald."⁶³ The memorandum stated that "state complaints were filed on November 22, 1963, charging Oswald with the murder of President Kennedy" and detailed evidence which indicated that Oswald had indeed assassinated the President. Although the memorandum did not inform President Johnson that the FBI had an open security case on Oswald at the time of the assassination, it did provide a limited description of Oswald's background, including his visit to the Soviet Union and activities for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.⁶⁴

⁶³ Letter from Hoover to President Johnson, 11/23/63, with attachment.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

In a telephone conversation with White House Aide Walter Jenkins immediately following Oswald's murder, Director Hoover stated:

The thing I am most concerned about, and so is Mr. Katzenbach, is having something issued so we can convince the public that Oswald is the real assassin.⁶⁵

The pressure to issue a report that would establish Oswald as the lone assassin is reflected in internal Bureau memoranda. On November 24, 1963, Assistant FBI Director Alan Belmont informed Associate FBI Director Clyde Tolson that he was sending two Headquarters supervisors to Dallas to review

the written interview and investigative findings of our agents on the Oswald matter, so that we can prepare a memorandum to the Attorney General . . . [setting] out the evidence showing that Oswald is responsible for the shooting that killed the President.⁶⁶

On November 26, 1963, J. Edgar Hoover spoke with Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach. According to Alan Belmont, Hoover relayed:

Katzenbach's feeling that this [FBI] report should include everything which may raise a question in the mind of the public or press regarding this matter.

In other words, this report is to settle the dust, insofar as *Oswald and his activities* are concerned, both from the standpoint that he is the man who assassinated the President, and relative to Oswald himself and his activities and background.⁶⁷ [Emphasis added.]

The next day, Belmont responded.

Relative to the Director's question as to how long we estimate the investigation in this matter will take, we plan to have the report on this matter, and on the Jack Ruby matter, this Friday, 11/29/63.

The investigation in both cases will, however, continue, because we are receiving literally *hundreds of allegations regarding the activities of Oswald and Ruby*, and *these*, of course, are being run out as received. I think this will continue and in the absence of being able to prove Oswald's motive and complete activities, we must check out and continue to investigate to resolve as far as possible any allegations or possibility that *he* was associated with others in this assassination. Likewise, we have to continue to prove [sic] the possibility that Jack Ruby was associated with someone else in connection with his killing of Oswald.⁶⁸ [Emphasis added.]

⁶⁵ Memorandum to the Files, by Walter Jenkins, 11/24/63. (4 p.m.).

By November 23 the State Department had concluded there was no foreign conspiracy involved in the President's assassination. (Dean Rusk testimony, 6/10/64, Warren Commission, Vol. V, pp. 367-368.)

⁶⁶ Memorandum from Belmont to Tolson, 11/24/63.

⁶⁷ Memorandum from Belmont to Sullivan, 11/26/63.

⁶⁸ Memorandum from Belmont to Tolson, 11/27/63.

The following notation appears at the bottom of this memorandum in Director Hoover's handwriting:

The Presidential Report on both matters should not be prepared until *all* allegations and angles have been completed.⁶⁹

The FBI delivered these reports to the White House and the Attorney General on December 5, 1963.

In a November 29, 1963, memorandum, Hoover recounted a telephone conversation he had that day with President Johnson:

The President called and asked if I am familiar with the proposed group they are trying to get to study my report—two from the House, two from the Senate, two from the courts, and a couple of outsiders. I replied that I had not heard of that but had seen reports from the Senate Investigating Committee.

The President stated he wanted to get by just with my file and my report. I told him I thought it would be very bad to have a rash of investigations. He then indicated the only way to stop it is to appoint a high-level committee to evaluate my report and tell the House and Senate not to go ahead with the investigation. I stated that would be a three-ring circus.

I advised the President that we hope to have the investigation wrapped up today, but probably won't have it before the first of the week as an angle in Mexico is giving trouble—the matter of Oswald's getting \$6,500 from the Cuban Embassy and coming back to this country with it; that we are not able to prove that fact; that we have information he was there on September 18 and we are able to prove he was in New Orleans on that date; that a story came in changing the date to September 28 and he was in Mexico on the 28th.⁷⁰

On December 3, 1963, the UPI wire carried a story reported in various newspapers under the following lead

An exhaustive FBI report now nearly ready for the White House will indicate that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone and unaided assassin of President Kennedy, Government sources said today.⁷¹

When he was informed of these news articles, Director Hoover wrote, "I thought no one knew this outside the FBI."⁷² According to William Sullivan, Hoover himself ordered the report "leaked" to the press, in

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, Belmont, DeLoach, Mohr, Sullivan and Rosen, 11/29/63.

William C. Sullivan, former Assistant Director in charge of the Domestic Intelligence Division, stated that "on November 29, 1963, the FBI had no data to support the conclusion that there was no foreign conspiracy." (Staff interview of William C. Sullivan, 4/21/76.)

⁷¹ Washington Evening Star, 12/3/63.

⁷² Hoover handwritten note on UPI ticker of 12/3/63.

an attempt to "blunt the drive for an independent investigation of the assassination."⁷³

In a December 1963 memorandum prepared to aid the Director in briefing the President, W. C. Sullivan wrote:

No evidence has been developed which would indicate Oswald's assassination of the President was inspired or directed by these [pro-Castro] organizations or by any foreign country.⁷⁴

2. Investigation by the General Investigative Division

The evidence developed by the Committee reveals that certain senior FBI officials in May 1962 learned of the 1960–1962 CIA–underworld plots to assassinate Fidel Castro, and learned from an informant in July 1964 that meetings between the CIA and a Cuban official dealt with the assassination of Castro.⁷⁵ Information concerning these plots was not general knowledge within the Bureau. For example, Alex Rosen the Assistant Director in charge of the General Investigative Division during the assassination investigation, testified that he had been unaware of CIA efforts to kill Castro and of Castro's retaliation threat.⁷⁶ Rosen was also unaware of any discussion of possible Cuban involvement in the assassination. For example, he testified:

I don't remember the Castro name coming up. Obviously it did, but I do not recall it. It is not fixed in my memory at all as being pertinent to the investigation.⁷⁷

The Committee heard similar testimony from the Headquarters officials who were actually responsible for the Division's day-to-day supervision of the assassination case.⁷⁸ One of these supervisors testified that he had "no knowledge whatsoever" of any Federal investigation of possible Cuban government involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy.⁷⁹ Another supervisor testified that he never

⁷³ Staff interview of William C. Sullivan, 4/21/76.

The Bureau, in response to a Committee request for documents in a letter dated 4/28/76, stated that it had no documents pertaining to any FBI release of the referenced preliminary report. Other persons, possibly knowledgeable of the alleged "leak," have not been questioned.

⁷⁴ Memorandum for the record from J. Edgar Hoover, 5/10/62; memorandum from Sullivan to Belmont, 12/4/63.

Sullivan told the Committee staff that "his initial view of his responsibility in the investigation [as head of the Intelligence Division] was to resolve questions of international involvement in the conspiracy." (Staff interview of William C. Sullivan, 4/21/76.)

⁷⁵ Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 7/29/64.

This Cuban official is referred to as AMLASH in this report and in the Committee's Assassination Report.

The FBI could not have characterized these meetings involving the Cuban official as the AMLASH operation because they did not know the Cuban had been code-named AMLASH by the CIA.

⁷⁶ Rosen, 4/30/76, pp. 14, 21. For further discussion of the retaliation threat.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁷⁸ Testimony of Supervisor I, 4/27/76, p. 19; testimony of Supervisor II, 4/27/76, p. 25; testimony of Supervisor III, 4/29/76, p. 9.

⁷⁹ Testimony of Supervisor I, 4/27/76, p. 13.

attended any conference or meetings where there was discussion of whether Castro or the Cuban government were responsible for the assassination.⁸⁰ According to one of these supervisors, the General Investigative Division's responsibility was "primarily dealing with the physical aspects of the case, the weapons, the bullets, the scientific approach to it, circumstances of [Oswald's] apprehension and subsequent killing, *and that would be about it.*"⁸¹ [Emphasis added]

3. *The Domestic Intelligence Division*

In November 1963, William Sullivan was the head of the Domestic Intelligence Division, which was responsible for the "subversive aspects of the assassination case." Sullivan told the Committee staff that he had never been informed of any assassination plots after 1962, including the AMLASH operation.⁸² Although he had been apprised of earlier Agency efforts to use underworld figures to assassinate Castro, by a memorandum detailing Director Hoover's May 10, 1962 conversation with Attorney General Kennedy, Sullivan's impression was that these plans had only been in the "discussion stage."⁸³ According to Sullivan, the Bureau made an "all-out effort" to investigate "possible foreign conspiracy" in the President's assassination. Sullivan could not recall specific measures the Bureau had taken and stated that he believed there were certain "gaps" in the FBI investigation.⁸⁴

Within the Domestic Intelligence Division, the assassination investigation was supervised by a squad of several Headquarters agents in the Soviet Section.⁸⁵ One of the Soviet Section supervisors who conducted the investigation described it as follows:

. . . our investigation was primarily concentrated on Lee Harvey Oswald, was he the assassin and to get the complete background investigation of him . . . it was an investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald, the man.

Question: But it didn't include Cuba?

Supervisor: Well, it included Oswald's contacts within the Cuban area.⁸⁶

This Soviet Section supervisor could not recall whether he had known of the CIA plots against Castro or Castro's warning of September 7, 1963.⁸⁷ Although in late 1963 he had been assigned the "responsibility of going through every file in the FBI to see whether any lead had

⁸⁰ Supervisor testimony, 3/31/76, p. 24. The third case supervisor within the General Investigative Division is deceased.

⁸¹ Supervisor testimony, 4/27/76, p. 12.

⁸² Staff interview of William C. Sullivan, 4/21/76.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ The Domestic Intelligence Division had supervised the FBI security case on Lee Harvey Oswald before the assassination. Within that Division, the Espionage Section (which handled Soviet matters) and the Nationalities Intelligence Section (which handled Cuban matters), had specific responsibilities in this case.

⁸⁶ Soviet Section Supervisor testimony, 4/23/76, pp. 5, 22.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

been overlooked in the case," to his knowledge, the Bureau never conducted an investigation to determine whether the Cuban government was responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy. The Supervisor noted that if such an investigation had been conducted, it would have been the responsibility of the Nationalities Intelligence Section of the Domestic Intelligence Division.⁸⁸

The Select Committee also examined former FBI officials who had been in the Nationalities Intelligence Section in the early 1960s. These officials were the Bureau personnel most familiar with Cuban matters and the activities of anti-Castro groups at the time of the assassination. The Chief of the Nationalities Intelligence Section testified

the investigation of the assassination was not in the division and I wasn't privy to any of the discussions. . . . even the phases that spilled over to the division were handled in the [Soviet] Section.⁸⁹

Another official in the Nationalities Intelligence Section, reputed to be the leading Cuba expert within the Bureau, testified that he was never informed of any CIA assassination attempts against Fidel Castro.⁹⁰ This supervisor had no recollection of any Bureau investigation of Cuban involvement in the assassination.

Q. Were there ever any meetings that you recall where there were discussions as to whether or not the Cubans were involved in the assassination of President Kennedy?

A. No. I don't recall. I would say no.

Q. Do you know if that possibility was investigated?

A. Well, I can't even say that for sure, no, I can't.

Q. Do you recall at any time ever seeing any memoranda or instructions that Cuban sources be contacted to see if there was any Cuban involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy?

A. There were no such communications, to my knowledge, ever sent out from Headquarters.

Q. If they were sent out, in all likelihood you would have known about it?

A. Yes, I think I would have. It's—that would have been a normal way of handling this kind of thing.⁹¹

This supervisor does not recall ever being informed of Castro's warning of retaliation. He did testify that had he been informed, he would have conducted the investigation differently.

Q. We have here a copy of an article from the New Orleans Times-Picayune on September 9, 1963, which I think has recently been in the press again. I will read a portion of it to you. It says "Prime Minister Fidel Castro turned up today at a reception at the Brazilian Embassy in Havana and submitted to an impromptu interview by Associated Press Correspondent Daniel Harker."

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸⁹ Former Section Chief, testimony, 5/11/76, p. 36.

⁹⁰ Supervisor testimony, 5/5/76, p. 33.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Now, we have been told by CIA experts that Castro giving an interview at that time was somewhat unusual.

Would you agree with that?

A. Yes.

Q. And it was also unusual that he would go to a reception at the Brazilian Embassy?

A. Uh huh.

Q. And the first paragraph of the article says, "Prime Minister Castro said Saturday night U.S. leaders would be in danger if they helped in any attempt to do away with leaders of Cuba." Then it goes on from there.

Do you recall ever seeing that article or hearing that statement from Castro?

A. No, I don't. In retrospect that certainly looks like a pointed signal, . . . If it had come to our attention—you know, if this article had been routed to us, it would have been a typical reaction by headquarters, to instruct the key field offices handling Cuban matters to alert their sources and be aware, you know, be particularly aware of anything that might indicate an assassination attempt but there was no such communication, to my knowledge, ever sent out from headquarters.⁹²

The Committee also took testimony from the Nationalities Intelligence Section expert on anti-Castro exiles in the United States. This supervisor testified that he was never asked to conduct an investigation of whether any Cuban exile group was involved in the assassination,⁹³ and stressed that he was "not part of the assassination team." He noted,

If there would be anything of interest to me, they may have given it to me. I don't recall any specific incident about that, but they were handling the assassination; I was handling the exiles. We were pretty much apart. I had little contact with them on the assassination, *per se*.⁹⁴

The Documentary Record.—The Committee's review of FBI instructions to its field offices in the United States, and to legal attaché offices around the world, confirms that FBI Headquarters did not inform field agents involved in the investigation of the CIA plots or Castro's warning.⁹⁵ Additionally, no instructions were ever issued by FBI Headquarters authorizing an intelligence investigation to determine whether there had been foreign involvement in the assassination.

For example, the FBI had sources in the field who might have been able to provide relevant information on possible Cuban involvement in

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 32–34.

⁹³ Supervisor I, 4/27/76, p. 16.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

This supervisor also testified that he could not recall any occasion where the issue of possible foreign involvement in the assassination was raised. (*Ibid.*, p. 25.)

⁹⁵ Each of the field agents involved in the assassination investigation who testified before the Committee confirmed this fact.

the assassination, but those sources were never utilized.⁹⁶ The instructions from FBI Headquarters were very general in nature and did not focus on such a possibility. The only Bureau communication which could have been construed as an instruction to interview security informants was rescinded by an instruction issued on the following day. Those security informants would have included individuals familiar with Cuba and Cuban exile matters.

At 9:40 p.m. on November 22, 1963, the Bureau dispatched a teletype to all of its field offices which read:

All offices immediately contact all informants, security, racial and criminal, as well as other sources, for information bearing on assassination of President Kennedy. All offices immediately establish whereabouts of bombing suspects, all known Klan and hate group members, known racial extremists, and any other individuals who on the basis of information available in your files may possibly have been involved.⁹⁷

At about 11 p.m. on November 22, 1963, the Bureau sent another teletype to its field offices:

The Bureau is conducting an investigation to determine who is responsible for the assassination. *You are therefore instructed to follow and resolve all allegations pertaining to the assassination.* This matter is of utmost urgency and should be handled accordingly keeping the Bureau and Dallas, the office of origin, apprised fully of all developments.⁹⁸ [Emphasis added.]

However, at 11:20 a.m. on November 23, 1963, the Bureau dispatched the following teletype to all of its field offices:

Lee Harvey Oswald has been developed as the principal suspect in the assassination of President Kennedy. He has been formally charged with the President's murder along with the murder of Dallas Texas patrolman J. D. Tippett by Texas state authorities. In view of developments all offices should *resume normal contacts with informants and other sources* with respect to bombing suspects, hate group members and known racial extremists. Daily teletype summaries may be discontinued. All investigation bearing directly on the President's assassination should be afforded most expeditious handling and Bureau and Dallas advised.⁹⁹ [Emphasis added.]

⁹⁶ It is also instructive to note that CIA Director John McCone telephoned FBI Director Hoover on the morning of November 26, 1963, and after noting that the President wanted to make sure the CIA was giving the FBI full support, specifically offered to make "CIA's operational resources in Mexico" available to the Bureau.

The Committee has seen no evidence that the FBI asked the CIA to conduct an investigation or gather information on the assassination case, but middle-level CIA personnel did routinely provide the Bureau with information that came to their attention in the assassination case.

⁹⁷ Memorandum from FBI Headquarters to all Field Offices, 11/22/63.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Memorandum from FBI Headquarters to all Field Offices, 11/23/63.

Thus, the Committee found that FBI Headquarters never instructed field agents to contact informants or sources familiar with Cuban matters to determine whether they had any information concerning Cuban involvement in the assassination. Those Cuban issues which were explored related solely to *Oswald* and *Oswald's* contacts, rather than the larger issue of determining whether subversive activities of the Cuban government or Cuban exile community were relevant to the assassination. No counterintelligence program, operation, or investigation, was ever initiated or discussed, to pursue this question.

The FBI Investigation in Mexico City.—The FBI Legat Attaché (Legat) in Mexico is the highest ranking Bureau official in that country, thus, the Bureau's assassination investigation there was under his direction. The Legat stated that while conducting the investigation, he proceeded under the "impression" conveyed to him by Bureau Headquarters, that Oswald was the lone assassin.¹⁰⁰ He further stated:

Our investigation was dedicated or directed toward establishing *Oswald's* activities in Mexico and looking toward trying to establish whether he had been accompanied by anyone while he was in Mexico.

We were able to get *him* in, get *him* out, where *he* stayed. I don't recall that we were able to establish where *he* was every day in Mexico.¹⁰¹ [Emphasis added.]

Bureau documents and testimony of knowledgeable officials revealed that the investigation was as circumscribed as the Legat testified.¹⁰²

On November 23, 1963, the Mexico Legat informed Headquarters:

[The] Ambassador . . . is greatly concerned that Cubans behind subject's assassination of President. He feels that both we and CIA doing everything possible there to establish or refute Cuban connection.¹⁰³

On November 24, 1963, the Legat cabled FBI Headquarters:

Ambassador here feels Soviets much too sophisticated to participate in direction of assassination of President by subject, but thinks Cubans stupid enough to have participated in such direction even to extent of hiring subject. If this should be case, it would appear likely that the contract would have been made with subject in U.S. and purpose of his trip to Mexico was to set up get away route. Bureau may desire to give consideration to polling all Cuban sources in U.S. in effort to confirm or refute this theory.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Legat testimony, 2/4/76, p. 23.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 24.

¹⁰² The evidence also establishes that there was confusion as to which U.S. agency was conducting the investigation in Mexico. Although the Ambassador and high-level government officials in Washington believed that the FBI was conducting the investigation in Mexico, the FBI's position was that, although the FBI would cooperate, only the "State Department and CIA have jurisdiction in getting investigative results abroad." (Memorandum to A. Belmont, 11/27/63.)

Ironically, neither the Legat nor the Bureau supervisor sent down to "direct and coordinate the investigation" knew whether the State Department or the CIA was in fact investigating in Mexico.

¹⁰³ FBI cable, Mexico Legat to Headquarters, 11/23/63.

¹⁰⁴ FBI cable, Mexico Legat to Headquarters, 11/24/63.

The Committee found no indication that the Bureau ever attempted to confirm or refute this theory. Indeed, a FBI Headquarters supervisor's handwritten notation on the cablegram states: "Not desirable. Would serve to promote rumors."

Richard Helms' sentiments coincided with this Bureau supervisor's. In his November 28, 1963, cable to the CIA's Mexico Station chief, Helms stated:

For your private information, there distinct feeling here in all three agencies [CIA, FBI, State] that Ambassador is pushing this case too hard . . . and that we could well create flap with Cubans which could have serious repercussions.¹⁰⁵

On November 27, 1963, the Legat sent an urgent cablegram informing Bureau Headquarters that a press release had been made by a former Cuban diplomat and noting:

At one point in the lengthy release he was quoted as saying that they do not have the slightest doubt that assassination of President Kennedy and subsequent elimination of his assassin is work of Communist direction. To back up this statement he alleged that Fidel Castro in his speech made at the Brazilian Embassy in Havana on September 7, 1963, accused CIA and President Kennedy of planning attempt against Castro and that Castro stated "Let Kennedy and his brother Robert take care of themselves since they too can be the victims of an attempt which will cause their death."¹⁰⁶

One of the major areas of investigation soon after Kennedy's assassination involved an allegation made by a Latin American, "D".¹⁰⁷ "D" walked into the American Embassy in Mexico City on November 25, 1963, and alleged that on September 18, 1963, he had observed Oswald receive \$6,500 from a Cuban consulate employee. "D" eventually admitted that he fabricated the allegation.¹⁰⁸ The Warren Commission reviewed "D's" original claim and concluded it was false, since overwhelming evidence indicated Oswald was in New Orleans on September 18, 1963.¹⁰⁹

Cable traffic discussing investigative responses to "D's" allegation indicates problems of coordination, especially in the area of possible Cuban involvement. When the American Embassy learned of "D's" allegation, the Ambassador requested that a Bureau representative "come down from Washington to Mexico City."¹¹⁰ CIA cables reflect the Ambassador's belief that he was not being fully informed on all

¹⁰⁵ CIA cable, Headquarters to Mexico Station, 11/28/63.

¹⁰⁶ FBI cable, Mexico Legat to Headquarters, 11/27/63.

The Committee has seen no indication that any action was taken upon receipt of this cable.

¹⁰⁷ Memorandum from Hoover to Messrs. Tolson, DeLoach, Sullivan, Belmont, Mohr and Rosen, 11/29/63. According to this memorandum, the Director advised the president that the FBI hoped "to have the investigation wrapped up today but probably won't have it before the first of the week as an angle in Mexico is giving trouble—the matter of Oswald's getting \$6,500 from the Cuban Embassy."

¹⁰⁸ Cable from Legat, Mexico City, to FBI Headquarters, 11/30/63.

¹⁰⁹ Warren Commission Report, pp. 307-309.

¹¹⁰ CIA cable from Mexico Station to Headquarters, 11/26/63.

developments in the FBI investigation in the United States. The Ambassador was also concerned about the gravity of "D's" allegation and requested that the investigation of "D's" claim be given the highest priority.¹¹¹ J. Edgar Hoover shared the Ambassador's concern over the allegation, noting:

Ambassador . . . may be one of the psuedo-investigators, a Sherlock Holmes, but he has made a lot of statements which, if true, throw an entirely different light on the whole picture.¹¹²

The supervisor's presence in Mexico City was short-lived. He arrived on November 27, and returned to FBI Headquarters on December 1, 1963. The supervisor testified that on the morning after his arrival in Mexico City that he, the Legat and the CIA Station Chief met with the Ambassador. At this meeting, the Ambassador

expressed his opinion that he felt that this was definitely a conspiracy and that we must turn over the last stone to find out if there is any overt conspiracy on the part of the Cubans.

He also made reference, I believe, to previous boasts by Castro that he would endeavor to get back at attempts by American forces to assassinate him.

At that time we tried to stress to Ambassador that every bit of information that we had developed in Washington, at Dallas, and elsewhere, indicated that this was a lone job.¹¹³

The supervisor also testified that he "knows of no investigation in Mexico to determine if there was Cuban involvement in the assassination of President Kennedy," other than disproving the "D" allegation.¹¹⁴ Once "D" admitted he had fabricated his story, the Ambassador "advised that it was no longer necessary for [the supervisor] to stay."¹¹⁵ Sullivan's previous statement that the supervisor was "selected to go to Mexico to direct and coordinate the entire investigation there and pursue it vigorously *until the desired results are obtained*,"¹¹⁶ cannot be reconciled unless the thorough investigation and desired results were to discredit "D's" allegations.¹¹⁷

Q. What I am trying to understand is what was done other than what ended up being the disproving of the "D" allegation. It looks like a negative investigation . . . well, let's get down there and wash it out and get this ambassador off our backs and we will all be happy and gay.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Memorandum from Sullivan to Belmont, 11/27/63.

One former FBI official told the Committee that Hoover's labeling the Ambassador a "Sherlock Holmes" had the effect within the Bureau, of causing FBI personnel "to disregard what the Ambassador was saying."

¹¹³ FBI supervisor testimony, 4/8/76, p. 10.

The supervisor subsequently testified that he had no knowledge of American attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹¹⁵ Memorandum from Belmont to Sullivan, 12/3/63.

¹¹⁶ William C. Sullivan, while admitting that this was a "poor choice of words," denied that he sent the supervisor to Mexico specifically to placate the Ambassador and "disprove "D."

¹¹⁷ Select Committee staff interview of W. C. Sullivan, 4/21/76.

Supervisor: Well, possibly on one hand you could say yes, we wanted definitively to protect the Bureau from any future allegations that the investigation was shoddy.

I believe there was a feeling that we had an outsider here, possibly a Sherlock Holms, who wanted to insert himself on this . . . so we went down there certainly to cover ourselves, to pacify the Ambassador, but in no way were we going to try to water it down.¹¹⁸

The supervisor also testified that he never had the opportunity to question "D." On the morning he arrived in Mexico City, the CIA turned "D" over to the Mexican police and denied the supervisor's repeated requests to interrogate "D".¹¹⁹ He learned that the Mexican police had exhaustively interrogated "D" and that he had recanted his allegations. The supervisor testified:

Q. There could have been a feeling of gratitude to the Mexican police's interrogation that resulted in this guy's recanting his story, that you wouldn't have the change to get it out of him.

A. That could be very definitely, I know the pressure was off when the Mexican police came and told us this was a complete fabrication.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Supervisor, 4/8/76, p. 43.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

However, the FBI Mexico City Legat later had access to "D" and interrogated him.

