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By: ~~Main~~ NARS, Date: 3/25/76

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

April 22, 1964

FROM: W. David Slawson  
SUBJECT: Trip to Mexico City

On Wednesday, April 8, 1964 Mr. Howard P. Willens, Mr. William T. Coleman, Jr., and Mr. W. David Slawson, all on the staff of the Commission, flew from Washington, D. C. to Mexico City. Mr. Coleman returned on Sunday, April 12 and Mr. Slawson and Mr. Willens returned on an airplane leaving Mexico City at about 3:20, Monday afternoon, April 13. This memorandum will briefly summarize this trip plus some of the meetings held in preparation for it.

TUESDAY - APRIL 7

10:20 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Willens, Coleman and Slawson met with Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Thomas Mann, Mr. Thomas Ehrlich of the Office of the Legal Adviser for the State Department, and two aides to Mr. Mann in Mr. Mann's office at about 10:20 a.m. Assistant Secretary Mann was Ambassador to Mexico at the time of the assassination and personally directed the investigatory effort and our relations with the Mexican law enforcement authorities immediately after the news of the President's death reached Mexico City. A copy

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per E.O. 11652, Sec. 5(a)(2)  
Name: W. D. Slawson Agency: CSA Date: 7/29/75  
Reason: E.O. 11652, Sec. (b)(2), Date not determined  
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of the file created by his efforts, consisting of telegrams between Mexico City and the State Department in Washington, had previously been forwarded to the Commission. The purpose of our meeting with Ambassador Mann was first, to inform him of our intent to go to Mexico and discuss with him our proposed actions there and second, to raise certain questions with him about his thoughts and actions in Mexico immediately after the assassination.

The file turned over to the Commission by Ambassador Mann contains statements of opinion by him that Oswald was probably involved in a sinister fashion, especially by way of taking a bribe, with the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City or with some other Castro agency. These suspicions were reinforced by the allegations of a certain "Alvarado" who at the time was being interrogated intensively by the Mexican authorities and by representatives of the American Embassy in Mexico City because he claimed to have seen Lee Harvey Oswald take \$6500 in American bills from an individual in the Cuban Embassy. We asked Ambassador Mann what particular evidence aside from the Alvarado assertions he had for these suspicions. He replied that he had none except the general feeling "in his guts" that Castro was the kind of dictator who might have carried out this

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kind of ruthless action, either through some hope of gaining from it or simply as revenge. The Ambassador added that not even the allegations of Alvarado or other rumors which may have been current in Mexico City to the effect that money had been given to Oswald were really the cause of his suspicions, since the Alvarado allegations were not made until a day or so later, but that the fact that Oswald had visited the Cuban and Russian Embassies in Mexico City shortly before the assassination, which he had learned from his security officers at the Embassy, plus what he believed about Castro's character, seemed sufficient to him to raise the gravest suspicions. Later, he pointed out, when he had a chance to listen to the Dorticos-Armas intercepts, his suspicions were strengthened.

Ambassador Mann knew of no contacts by Oswald with anyone in Mexico City other than his visits to the Cuban and Soviet Embassies and his staying at the Hotel del Comercio. Ambassador Mann said that our intelligence took and was still taking photographs of both the Cuban and Soviet Embassies whenever anyone left or entered their main entrances, at least during the normal visiting hours on Monday through Friday, during the daytime when pictures could be taken without artificial light.

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The Ambassador said that he had been kept informed of the Silvia Duran interrogation through his aides, Clarke Anderson and Winston Scott. He learned of it informally, that is, Anderson and Scott reported orally to him as soon as they received from the Mexican authorities at "Gobernacion" any news about how the interrogation was progressing.

In response to our questions, the Ambassador recommended that when we got to Mexico City we should work through the representatives of the FBI and the CIA at the American Embassy and, through them, with the Mexican officials they recommended, but that we should do all of this as quietly as possible, without any newspaper publicity. We also asked Ambassador Mann to what extent it was known in Mexico City that the Hotel del Comercio was a headquarters for pro-Castro activities. The Ambassador replied that it was not known generally at all, that this information was current only in intelligence circles.

Ambassador Mann said that the file from his Embassy which had previously been forwarded to the Commission constituted the entire file which was in existence on this particular subject, with the one exception that it may not have included

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the report from the FBI referred to therein. We confirmed that it had not included that report. He said that he was sure that this report could be obtained from Clarke Anderson in Mexico City, if we thought it was necessary. In response to a similar question about the "Alvarado" file, he replied that any additional papers in the possession of American authorities that might be in existence on Alvarado could probably be obtained through the CIA and that we could speak to Mr. Scott about this. He said that he had never seen any papers or formal statements by Silvia Duran; all his information about what she is supposed to have told the Mexican police was received by word of mouth through his aides, Scott and Anderson.

Ambassador Mann was then called out to another conference, for which he was already a half-hour late. As the meeting was breaking up he asked Mr. Slawson whether, with the benefit of hindsight, the members of the Commission staff felt that his recommendations and actions shortly after the assassination had been justified or whether we thought they were unduly rash. Mr. Slawson replied that although the investigation of the specific allegations of Alvarado had shown that they were in all probability a fabrication, he found nothing in what the Ambassador had done to have been unjustified, in

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view of the facts known to him and his assistants at the time and in view of the extreme seriousness of the occurrence.

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

At 3:30 in the afternoon Mr. Jack Witten of the CIA came to the Commission offices and conferred there with Slawson, Willens and Coleman. This conference grew out of a suggestion made by Mr. Richard Helms of the CIA about two weeks previous, in which he had mentioned that it would be a good idea if a representative of his agency met with those persons from the Commission who planned to go to Mexico just before they left, in order to insure that the CIA could properly advise us of any last-minute arrangements and properly alert its people in Mexico of our arrival.

We discussed whether we would journey to Mexico officially and openly or completely incognito, and Mr. Witten offered to make arrangements to get us into Mexico completely unnoticed if we desired to do so. We told him that we did not want to try to keep the trip entirely secret. We would do our best to avoid any kind of newspaper publicity or public announcements. We intended to introduce ourselves at the

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9:00. However, weather and technical difficulties held up the plane in Philadelphia and we did not get off the ground in Washington until almost 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon.

After a short stop in New Orleans we arrived in Mexico City at about 6:00 p.m., Mexico City time. We were met as we came off the airplane by a representative of Eastern Airlines, Mr. Jorge Villagomez, who addressed each of us by name, gave us his business card and eased our way through Mexican customs. An unidentified man approached Mr. Willens and asked if we were from the Embassy. Willens replied that we were not. The individual asked if it was true that people were coming to investigate the assassination. Willens refused to confirm this report. Mr. Coleman had some minor difficulties with the Mexican Immigration officials over whether or not he had been vaccinated recently, and in the course of discussions on this the Eastern Airlines representative mentioned to the Immigration official something to the effect that Mr. Coleman was a representative of the Warren Commission. This comment could have been overheard by the person who had approached Mr. Willens, who in the meantime had walked back towards Mr. Coleman. If all this occurred as we suspect it may have, it could explain why there was an announcement in two

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of the Mexico City newspapers the following morning naming us and stating that we had come to Mexico on business for the Commission.

Just inside the airport terminal we were met by Mr. Clarke Anderson and Mr. Rolfe Larson from the American Embassy. These men were later identified, respectively, as Chief of the FBI in Mexico City and an FBI agent temporarily assigned for duty in Mexico City. Anderson and Larson took the three of us to our hotel, the Continental Hilton.

THURSDAY - APRIL 9

9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

At 9:00 a.m. the three of us met in the FBI offices at the Embassy with Mr. Larson and discussed generally with him the progress of the assassination investigation while we were waiting to meet Ambassador Freeman. Clarke Anderson and Winston Scott, the CIA Chief in Mexico City, were conferring with the Ambassador and briefing him on the Mexican aspects of the assassination investigation. Ambassador Freeman had been at this post only two days, having just presented his credentials to the President of Mexico on Monday, April 6.

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9:30 a.m. to 9:55 a.m.

We met with the Ambassador at about 9:30 in the morning. Present besides the three of us and the Ambassador were Minister Boonstra, Winston Scott and Clarke Anderson.

Mr. Coleman explained in general terms the purpose of our trip. He said that we wanted to learn as much as possible about what investigations were currently being carried out, with special emphasis on the Hotel del Comercio and on Oswald's northbound journey out of Mexico City, and that we wanted to decide upon and initiate whatever new lines of investigation we felt were called for. In connection with looking into these investigations, we wished to satisfy ourselves that everything reasonably possible was being done and, in addition, we wanted to become as current as possible on evidence being produced. Also, we hoped to make contact with one or more Mexican officials so as to learn directly from them what part they had played in the assassination investigation and what they had learned that might be of value to us. In particular, we wanted to find out as much as possible about what Mrs. Silvia Duran, the clerk at the Cuban Embassy who dealt frequently with Oswald, knew. Finally, we hoped to make arrangements for, and

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and perhaps accomplish, the authentication of our evidence obtained in Mexico, by the taking of depositions or by inviting witnesses to appear before the Commission to testify.

Mr. Coleman added that we hoped in all this to be guided by the counsel of the Ambassador and his staff, because we did not want to do anything that would disturb the good relations of the American and Mexican governments.

Ambassador Freeman replied that he and his staff would cooperate completely. He said that he saw no objection whatever to our talking directly to Mexicans who had some information to contribute, but he felt that this should be done only in the Embassy and only on the clearly stated basis that all appearances and testimony were totally voluntary on the part of the Mexicans. As to speaking to Mexican officials, the Ambassador again said that this would be fine and he asked only that we work through his staff in setting up appointments, etc. The Ambassador pointed out that the taking of formal depositions in a foreign country could be a very difficult and technical matter. He referred us to the Consulate section of the Embassy for information on how to go about doing this.

The Ambassador, Clarke, Boonstra and Anderson felt

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Embassy and to Mexican officials as what we in fact were, representatives of the Commission.

Witten said that in dealing with Mr. Winston Scott, the CIA Chief for Mexico, we would be working with one of the top foreign operatives in their entire organization. He said that the CIA would give us complete cooperation.

We outlined to Mr. Witten our entire proposed plan once we arrived in Mexico, in general terms, and asked for his comments on how best to achieve our goals. His reply in every instance was that we should deal on the spot with Mr. Scott. Witten thought that our proposed journey was a very good idea. He repeated what Mr. Helms of the CIA had said a while ago, that there is no substitute for the "case officer" being "on the spot."

WEDNESDAY - APRIL 8

8:15 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Our plane was scheduled to leave Washington from Dulles Airport at 9:30 in the morning and accordingly all three of us met at the Washington Air Terminal in the Albert Pick Motel at about 8:15 and later arrived at the Airport at about

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that our seeing Silvia Duran would be a highly sensitive matter and that it should be discussed fully with the Mexican officials, but they agreed that it did not differ in principle from our seeing other Mexican witnesses, i.e., the Ambassador approved so long as we saw her in the American Embassy, and made clear to her that her appearance was entirely voluntary.

There then followed an exchange of views on how best to approach Mexican officials, what Mexican officials would be most valuable for our purposes, and the general substance of our work. At about five minutes to ten the Ambassador had to excuse himself for his first staff meeting, which he had called for 10:00 a.m.

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Willens, Coleman and Slawson retired to the office that had been assigned to them at the Embassy, room 510, to discuss the conference with the Ambassador and generally to draw up outlines for our coming conference with the FBI, the CIA and Mr. Boonstra.

11:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Mr. Anderson and Mr. Scott came to room 510 after

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the staff meeting had adjourned. We agreed that we would confer with Mr. Anderson immediately and meet Mr. Scott later in the day, at about 3:30. Mr. Anderson was welcome to come with us at our meeting with Mr. Scott, if he desired to do so, and he said that he would make up his mind on this after he had conferred with us, because he of course had other work to do and would not want to attend the meeting with Scott if it would simply involve him in a repetition of ground he had already covered.

Accordingly, we met immediately with Clarke Anderson in his offices. He invited Rolfe Larson and a Mr. Trent to take part in the conference. Mr. Trent was also an agent of the FBI temporarily on duty in Mexico.

One of the topics of conversation was Reverend Albert Alexander Osborne, also known as John Howard Bowen. Mr. Trent had been the agent primarily engaged in tracking down and talking with Bowen, although Larson too had been somewhat involved. Briefly, the agents described Bowen as an elderly white haired gentleman who was probably engaged in some kind of violation of the law in his fund raising, because it was not clear that he actually used the money he received for religious

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purposes, at least of the kind he represented that he would use the money for, and they both regarded Bowen as somewhat unstable mentally. Trent described how when he first approached Bowen he referred to him as "Mr. Osborne," and the reply was that he, Trent, must be mistaken, because he, Osborne, was Bowen. Osborne then went on to say that he was often mistaken for Osborne but that he had not seen that other gentleman in some time, and believed he was in some other section of Mexico, etc. Trent said that Osborne carried this off very well. It was not until later that Osborne admitted that he was really Osborne but that he often used the name Bowen. When asked directly how they thought Osborne would react to being asked or compelled to appear to testify before the Commission or a staff member, Trent and Larson were inconclusive. They thought that there might be trouble but they were not sure. Trent and the other FBI representatives then described the procedures the Mexican Immigration Authorities were using in dealing with Osborne. In sum, the authorities had not acted as yet to deport Osborne but they believe that they had sufficient grounds to do so at any time. In the meantime they were keeping an eye on him and were questioning him occasionally. The FBI representatives felt that if we

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wanted to push it, the Mexican authorities would deport Osborne quickly.

The discussion then continued on to other investigations. Larson gave a detailed summary of recent results of the investigation of Oswald's northbound travel on the Transportes del Norte bus. I will not go into what he said here because it is now reflected in an FBI report in the possession of the Commission. We advised him to include as much detail as possible in the reports which he sent through channels in Washington to our Commission because the detail which he had told us orally seemed to fit what we knew about Oswald's background and was therefore valuable as confirmatory material in the overall picture, even though it perhaps seemed important to Larson. We then supplied various details about Oswald's background and character which might assist Larson in interrogating witnesses in Mexico. Larson, Trent and Anderson agreed to include all possible detail in their future reports from Mexico.

Larson and Anderson then went into a discussion of the Hotel del Comercio investigation. Here, it appears that the conclusion of the Mexican investigators that no one at the hotel

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remembered Oswald and that the only evidence of his stay there was his name on the register was incorrect. Larson, after several interrogations, had found that the maid at the hotel did remember Oswald and was able to give some bits of information about him. For one thing, she, as did other witnesses, confirmed that he was always alone when she saw him. Further, she said that he invariably had left the hotel before she cleaned his room at about 9:00 in the morning. Larson had also found out that the proprietress of the little restaurant next door to the hotel was able to identify Oswald, although Larson was not completely certain on how much she really remembered and how much she may have picked up by suggestion from newspaper reporters. Anyway, she has stated that Oswald frequently ate lunches and dinners at her restaurant, that he invariably ordered very cheap meals, that he always ate alone, and that he was not able to converse sufficiently in Spanish so that he really knew what he was ordering when he ordered a meal. For example, he often refused soup and dessert, apparently believing that he was thereby saving money, although both items were included in the cost of the full meal.

Various other investigations of Oswald and of places where Oswald may have been in Mexico City were also touched upon,

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such as the bull fight arena, the jai alai games, and the places where he may have purchased tourist items. For example, Larson and Anderson said that another one of their agents had questioned more than three hundred silver shops in an attempt to locate the place where Oswald may have purchased a silver bracelet inscribed "Marina." The response had been negative at each shop and subsequent investigation has shown that such bracelets are probably not sold in Mexico at all because they are made in Japan and the duty on importing them into Mexico would make their price non-competitive with local products.

We then asked what was the status of the Gutierrez investigation. Trend and Larson and Anderson all agreed that Gutierrez was sincere and was doing all he could to cooperate with the investigation of what he claims to have seen. In fact, Gutierrez has spend a considerable amount of time trying to get more valuable information and he has never tried to receive any compensation for this work. The weakness in Gutierrez' story, according to the FBI representatives, is the identification of Oswald. For example, Gutierrez has failed to identify Oswald as the man he saw at the Cuban Embassy receiving money when shown a picture of Oswald passing out

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Fair Play for Cuba pamphlets in New Orleans during the summer of 1963. Gutierrez says that he never saw his man in profile, only from the rear and, very fleetingly, from a direct forward view. His best piece of identification is to the automobile he saw "Oswald" and the Cuban enter just outside of the Embassy. Even here, however, assuming that his description of the automobile is completely accurate, there are probably dozens of such automobiles in and around Mexico City. Renault is a popular make of car in Mexico, and the color described by Gutierrez is a popular color. One automobile answering this description and frequently seen around the Cuban Embassy has been located, but it is still registered under the name of the man who owned and sold it several years ago. This situation is apparently common in Mexico. Mexicans often register a car under the name of its former owner in order to avoid paying a sales tax on the transfer. However, investigation is continuing to see if the present owner of this particular automobile can be located. In addition, a constant surveillance of the Cuban Embassy and its vicinity is being kept, to spot this or similar car, and if one is spotted, further investigation will be carried out.

Slawson then mentioned that we had brought with us from Washington all the items of physical evidence which might

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relate to Mexico. It was agreed that Slawson and Larson would go through these items later. We then inquired as to our seeing the reports and current work papers of the FBI in Mexico. Anderson replied that these were open to our examination at any time and that he and his agents would show us whatever we would like to see. We agreed that we would look at particular reports later, as the occasion warranted.

Silvia Duran was then discussed. It appeared that her signed statement had finally been obtained from the Mexican Police. Previously, the existence of such a statement had not been known. We agreed that we would see that later in the day or tomorrow and that it would also be forwarded through channels to the Commission in Washington. We emphasized that we wanted not only a translation of the statement but, if possible, a copy of the statement itself. The FBI representatives described Duran as best they could, basically, as a "Mexican pepperpot," a devout communist, and "sexy." (The CIA later showed us some pictures of her, which substantially confirmed this description.) We discussed what would be the best approaches to our possibly seeing her. Anderson felt that this would be a touchy point but agreed that we should try to do it if we could. He thought that the Mexican official that we should see about this as well as all other aspects of our

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investigation was Luis Echevarria, Acting Secretary of the Interior. Anderson said that he was well acquainted with Echevarria and that he got along very well with him, as did Winston Scott.

Willens, Slawson and Coleman each got the impression from this conference that the FBI in Mexico City had been completely frank and open with us. So far as we can determine every question we asked was answered without an attempt at evasion, and much information volunteered which we had not asked. Both Larson and Anderson give a very good impression of competence and Anderson's knowledge of the details of the assassination investigation was especially impressive since his duties are primarily supervisory.

The Alvarado investigation was also reviewed. Clarke Anderson said that he was present at the Alvarado interrogation which was taken under a polygraph machine. The polygraph operator, who did not speak Spanish, stood behind Alvarado when he was fastened to the machine and pointed to various questions written in English which he wanted Anderson to ask. Anderson would then ask Alvarado the question in Spanish.

In response to our direct question Anderson replied that now that the investigations were more or less complete

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his expert opinion was that no foreign conspiracy arising out of or connected with the territory of Mexico existed in connection with the assassination. He said that he felt that if such had existed, although perhaps they would not have solved it by this time, they at least would have some firm indication that it was in existence, which indications were in fact lacking. We asked Anderson how many different allegations of conspiracy had been received by his office and he replied, six. These were: the Gutierrez allegation, the Alvarado allegation, the Diaz Verson allegation, the Martino-Roja allegation, the letter from Victor Cohen, and the allegation concerning the Stanford University student. Mr. Slawson commented that in his opinion only the first three allegations mentioned even seemed serious and that, after analysis, the only one that still seemed serious was Gutierrez'. Anderson readily agreed.

3:20 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

After lunch the three of us went to Mr. Scott's office, and were there introduced to his deputy, Mr. Alan White. The conference was begun by Mr. Scott giving us a complete narrative of the CIA's activities in connection with Lee Harvey Oswald, beginning in September 1963 when they first picked up information that Oswald had appeared at the Russian and Cuban

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Embassies. Mr. Scott stated at the beginning of his narrative that he intended to make a complete disclosure of all facts, including the sources of his information, and that he understood that all three of us had been cleared for Top Secret and that we would not disclose beyond the confines of the Commission and its immediate staff the information we obtained through him without first clearing it with his superiors in Washington. We agreed to this.

Mr. Scott's narrative of course took a rather long time to complete, and we interrupted him at many points with specific questions. During the course of the narrative we were shown the actual transcripts, plus the translations, of all the telephone intercepts involved, and we were also shown the reels of photographs for all the days in question that had been taken secretly outside the Cuban and Soviet Embassy entrances.

Mr. Scott's narrative disclosed that the CIA's action immediately after the assassination consisted basically of alerting all its confidential sources of information throughout Mexico to immediately channel all information into their headquarters, and of compiling as complete dossiers as possible on Oswald and everyone else throughout Mexico who at that time the CIA knew had had some contact with Oswald. This meant especially Silvia Duran, who because she had previously been having an

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affair with Lachuga, the former Cuban Ambassador to Mexico and presently the Cuban representative at the United Nations, had previously been of substantial interest to the CIA, Eusibio Azque, Duran's superior at the Cuban Embassy, Kostikov, a KGB representative at the Soviet Embassy, and others, and conveying this information to Washington. In addition, the CIA worked closely with the FBI and with the Mexican authorities, especially on the Silvia Duran interrogations. Finally, Mr. Scott, along with Mr. Anderson, was in constant contact with Ambassador Mann, to keep him as current as possible on all information coming in and on other developments.

Scott pointed out that his headquarters had picked up the name of Lee Harvey Oswald from commercial radio broadcasts and had begun compiling information on him from its Mexican files even before being requested to do so by CIA in Washington. All his men were taken off any other assignment they may have been on and told to concentrate solely on the assassination. All the persons previously mentioned who might have been in contact with Oswald, plus other people who in Scott's opinion might possibly be involved, were put under surveillance. This included, for example, the Cuban Ambassador and all known local Cuban and Russian intelligence agents. Immediately liaison was set up with Mexican officials. A messenger sent by Echevarria

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to the American Embassy at this time disclosed that Echevarria and President Lopez Mateo had ordered the Mexican border closed for travel both ways, without having been requested to do so by the American Embassy. Scott said that the border closure was so thorough that busloads of school children were trapped on both sides.

Scott's narrative plus the materials we were shown disclosed immediately how incorrect our previous information had been on Oswald's contacts with the Soviet and Mexican Embassies. Apparently the distortions and omissions to which our information had been subjected had entered some place in Washington, because the CIA information that we were shown by Scott was unambiguous on almost all the crucial points. We had previously planned to show Scott, Slawson's reconstruction of Oswald's probable activities at the embassies to get Scott's opinion, but once we saw how badly distorted our information was we realized that this would be useless. Therefore, instead, we decided to take as close notes as possible from the original source materials, at some later time during our visit.

In view of what we had learned about the photographic coverage of the Cuban and Soviet Embassies, we inquired whether photographs of Oswald coming or going from one or both

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embassies might be available. Scott said they were not. He explained that photographic coverage was limited by and large to the daylight weekday hours, because of lack of funds and because no adequate technical means for taking photographs at night from a long distance without artificial light, which was of course out of the question under the circumstances, had been developed.

We brought up the question of Gutierrez and received from Scott and White basically the same information we had previously learned from the FBI, though somewhat attenuated because, as Scott and White pointed out, the FBI was carrying the primary responsibility with Gutierrez. We suggested that Gutierrez' story might be confirmed or refuted by photographs taken by the CIA, that in particular the automobile he claimed to have seen might show up on the fringes of some of these photographs, and we inquired whether an appropriate examination of the picture reels had been made. White replied that such an examination had not yet been made and that he suspected that it would disclose nothing new, because the photographs covered little more than the entrance itself. However, he promised to make such an examination. (About a day later Scott reported to us that such an examination had been made and proved negative.)

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In answer to our question, White and Scott gave their professional opinions that there probably was not a foreign conspiracy connected with Mexico involving the assassination of the President. They, like Anderson, felt that had there been such a conspiracy they would at least by this time have had some firm indications of its existence.

We asked Mr. Scott to set up a meeting with Secretary Echevarria for all three of us at the earliest possible time. We wanted both him and Mr. Anderson there, if possible, both as interpreters and because their previous personal acquaintance with the Secretary would facilitate our dealings. Scott telephoned Anderson and confirmed this request.

We then reentered our discussion of the assassination in general, as it related to Mexico. It appeared that the CIA in Washington had not forwarded certain material developed elsewhere to Scott, even though these materials might have reasonably related to the Mexican investigations. For example, the contents of the letter which Oswald wrote to the Russian Embassy after he returned to the United States, describing certain aspects of his trip, had never been disclosed to Scott or his staff. We showed them the contents of this letter at this meeting.

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During this general discussion Mr. Willens was called out to meet with Minister Boonstra in regard to the publicity which had appeared in the local newspapers about our visit. This involved the drafting of a telegram to the State Department in Washington in regard to this publicity and an estimate as to the reason for it. Also, Willens learned at this time from Boonstra that the Embassy did not have a copy of the file forwarded to the Commission by Ambassador Mann. Apparently, Ambassador Mann's personal file is the only one now in existence aside from the Commission copies of it, all other copies having been destroyed when the Ambassador left his post in Mexico. Boonstra told Willens that he (Boonstra) is the only person other than Scott and Anderson who was involved with Ambassador Mann in the assassination investigations. Mr. Willens asked Boonstra to begin thinking about how best we could forward a request to the Mexican officials for a complete report on their role in the assassination investigations. At this time Boonstra's only comment was that such a report should, if possible, be obtained prior to its being reviewed by the Mexican Foreign Office, because such a review might censor out substantial portions for political reasons and in any event would involve substantial delay. He suggested that review by the Foreign Office be a condition of publication at a later

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time, but that it not be permitted to hold up the information at this stage.

Back in the CIA offices, during Willens' absence, Slawson and Coleman discussed the cable traffic from the Soviet and Cuban Embassies both during the time of Oswald's visits there in September-October 1963 and immediately after the assassination. Scott and White said that no increases or unusual variations had been noted at either time. We then discussed briefly the possibilities that the National Security Agency might be able to "break" the codes for the times when Oswald was in Mexico City, using as a key the fact that Oswald's attempt to obtain a visa was probably communicated to Washington on Friday or Saturday, September 27 or 28. Scott pointed out that all his office did with coded materials was to send them back to the National Security Agency in Washington in the form in which it obtained them. They felt that the code-breaking might be possible, however, and should be tried.

FRIDAY - APRIL 10

9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Coleman, Willens and Slawson appeared at the FBI offices at 9:00 a.m., as we had agreed to do the previous evening, and there met Rolfe Larson. The plan had been that we

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were immediately to depart on a tour of the spots which Oswald had visited during his trip to Mexico, but Larson told us that he had just been requested not to leave until 9:45, because by that time we expected some confirmation of the hour when we could meet with Secretary Echevarria. We therefore sat in Anderson's office and discussed with Larson the relative locations and other physical aspects of the places we were to see later in the morning. Soon Anderson came in and told us that the appointment with Echevarria was firm for 11:30. The Ambassador had been told about the meeting and again approved it, repeating his conditions that when we ask Echevarria for permission to speak directly with Mexican citizens that we make clear that we wanted all interviews to be within the American Embassy and to be completely voluntary. We then had a brief discussion on how we would handle the meeting with Echevarria. Willens and Slawson said that we had agreed the previous evening that Bill Coleman would carry the discussion for us and that Coleman would spend the first few minutes in conveying the gratitude and appreciation of the American Government to the Mexican Government for its assistance to date, its satisfaction with the quality of such assistance, etc., and other matters of etiquette and friendship, which we had been told were essential when dealing in a formal manner with

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Mexicans. Anderson and the others present at this conference agreed that this would be the best approach.

9:45 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

The three of us were driven by Rolfe Larson in an unmarked automobile around the various points that had been touched upon by Oswald. We saw the Transportes del Norte bus terminal, the Transportes Frontera bus terminal, the Flecha Roja bus terminal, the Chihuahuiences travel agency, the Hotel del Comercio, the restaurant next door to the hotel where Oswald reportedly ate many meals, other hotels in the neighborhood of the Hotel del Comercio and the various bus stations and this neighborhood generally, the Cuban Embassy and Consulate, and the Russian Embassy and Consulate.

Several observations were immediately obvious. The two embassies are close enough together so that Oswald almost certainly walked back and forth between them when the occasion called for it. The embassies, although theoretically reachable from the Hotel del Comercio or the inter-city bus stations by local bus, are in practice so located that reaching them by bus would be much too complex for someone who was not familiar with the bus lines in Mexico City and especially for someone

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who did not speak Spanish fluently enough to get precise directions. The Hotel del Comercio, although certainly a cheap hotel and one in which American tourists would ordinarily never stay, has a neat, clean appearance and, according to Larson, is in fact clean inside, and stands out from its surroundings as being definitely more attractive than the other hotels in the neighborhood.

Although one-way streets make it difficult to drive from the Flecha Roja bus terminal to the Hotel del Comercio except by devious routes, for someone walking, as Oswald was, it would be an easy distance and a natural direction to walk. The hotels near this particular bus terminal are almost all grouped around the same area as the Hotel del Comercio, and it would seem very possible that Oswald could have been directed towards this neighborhood if he inquired of the whereabouts of an inexpensive hotel. Moreover, coming from the direction of the bus terminal, the Hotel del Comercio would very likely be the first reasonably clean and attractive hotel that one would notice. Some of the other hotels in this neighborhood closer to the terminal than the del Comercio are also attractive, although perhaps not quite so as the Hotel del Comercio, but Rolfe Larson pointed out that those hotels tend to get filled earlier and therefore Oswald might have been referred further

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down the street if he inquired at one of them for a room and was turned down.

Larson confirmed what we had been told by both Anderson and Scott earlier, that none of them had any indication whatever that the Hotel del Comercio was known as a meeting place for Cuban revolutionaries or even for Cubans, revolutionary or not. Larson said that he of course had investigated this possibility and that his examination of the hotel register for the periods around Oswald's visit there had disclosed only one Cuban name. Further investigation showed that this belonged to a Cuban family man who had his family with him and that they were tourists traveling through Mexico.

The Cuban and Soviet Embassies have no remarkable characteristics except that both are surrounded by high adobe walls which make observation of their interiors extremely difficult. The Cuban Consulate, where Oswald did most of his dealings, is a small separate building on the corner of the Cuban complex of buildings, with its exterior walls coterminous with the adobe walls which surround the area. Its front door therefore opens onto the street. Exit and entry into the Consulate, therefore, forms an exception in that it can easily be observed by persons outside.

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After driving around with Larson we returned and parked the car in front of the American Embassy and waited just outside the car for Scott and Anderson to come out, as we had agreed beforehand. They came out shortly after 11:00 a.m. and we all got into the car and drove to the Mexican Ministry of the Interior to meet Senor Echevarria.

11:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

We arrived at Senor Echevarria's office somewhat early but were nevertheless immediately brought in to meet him. We were soon joined by his head assistant for this kind of work, Senor Ibanez, Chief of Inspections. Clarke Anderson acted as interpreter, under our instructions that he should feel free to elaborate as to courtesies and details at any time, and Winston Scott also interpreted at a few points.

As previously agreed, Mr. Coleman did the talking for the three of us. He expressed the thanks of the American government, and of the Warren Commission in particular, for the cooperation our nation had received from his agency and from the Mexican government generally, and in general exchanged pleasantries and courtesies. Coleman also told Echevarria that Chief Justice Warren had sent his personal thanks to Echevarria.

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Coleman asked that the Mexican government give the Commission a complete and as detailed as possible report on all the investigations it had carried on in connection with the assassination and on any other actions, such as closing the border, it had carried through. Echevarria readily agreed to do this, saying that all the basic reports which would go into such an overall report had already been prepared and that he could deliver the overall report on 48 hours notice. He asked, however, that we deliver a formal request for this report to the Mexican foreign office, addressed to his attention, in order that it not be mistakenly sent to some other police or investigatory agency in Mexico. (We had learned from other sources that there are 26 different police forces operating in the Mexico Federal District alone.) He said that he would telephone the foreign office immediately after our conference to alert them that he was the person responsible for the note and would appreciate its being forwarded to him for his appropriate action. We agreed that we would deliver such a note that afternoon if possible, marked to his attention as he had requested.

Mr. Coleman went on to tell Echevarria that we were treating all communications from Mexico on this subject as confidential and that we would do the same for the report he was

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going to deliver to us. We would publish only after receiving clearance from the Mexican government, which clearance we planned to seek at some later point in our investigation. Echevarria agreed that this had been his understanding all along and that it would also be the understanding upon which he would convey the full report to us.

Echevarria then discussed briefly the overall situation and gave his strong opinion that there was no foreign conspiracy involved in the assassination, at least no conspiracy connected with Mexico.

Coleman then brought up the matter of our interviewing witnesses for documentation purposes and to find out additional information, if possible, in Mexico. To give a specific illustration of what we had in mind, Mr. Coleman used the manager of the Hotel del Comercio as an example. Echevarria replied basically in the affirmative, but he made two important qualifications. First, he felt that the interviews should not be in the American Embassy, because to hold them there would give the appearance of an official investigation being carried on by the American government on Mexican soil, and this, he felt, would be very disadvantageous politically for the present Mexican government. He pointed out

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that an election for president was scheduled to be held in July, that such elections were held only every six years in Mexico, and that the present time was therefore extremely sensitive politically. One of the most effective propaganda weapons the communists have in Mexico is the alleged American domination and interference with the Mexican government and any unduly public investigatory activities on our part would lend themselves to this kind of propaganda. Second, Echevarria requested that the interviews with Mexican nationals not be formal but that instead, for example, we ought to arrange to have lunch or coffee, etc., with the persons with whom we wished to speak.

Our reply to this, made through Mr. Coleman, was that we did not want any appointments for lunch or otherwise made at this time because we wanted to leave the entire problem open. We had not in our own minds decided whether and to what extent we wanted to proceed on this basis. Echevarria agreed that he would take no action until we requested it.

There was an interruption here while Echevarria spoke in Spanish to Ibanez. The three of us took the opportunity to consult quietly in English with one another. Coleman felt that in view of Echevarria's reluctance to permit

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formal meetings even with unimportant witnesses such as the hotel clerk, that the proposal we had for dealing with Silvia Duran ought to be handled very circumspectly. He proposed to do this by shifting the conversation back to the overall report, stressing that in the writing of this report we felt that Duran's interrogation was of the highest importance, and then hopefully shifting the conversation onto the subject of how we could deal directly with Duran. Willens and Slawson agreed with this approach.

Coleman then again spoke to Echevarria, referring back to the overall report and describing our feeling of importance as to Silvia Duran, etc., as outlined in the previous paragraph. Echevarria replied by emphatically agreeing that Duran's testimony was of the greatest importance and promising to go into as much detail and documentation as possible in connection with her evidence in his final report. He commented that it was upon the information his men had obtained from her that he had relied most heavily in concluding that no conspiracy had been hatched during Oswald's visits to Mexico. At about this point, Echevarria abruptly took steps to end the meeting. He said that he had an appointment to have lunch with Queen Juliana, who was then in the midst of an official visit

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to Mexico, and that he of course had to be on time. Coleman used the opportunity to say jokingly that we would like to have lunch with Silvia Duran while Echevarria was with the Queen. Echevarria replied in the same vein that we would not have as much fun as we thought because Duran was not a good-looking Cuban but only a Mexican. With this rather inconclusive result on Duran, the meeting ended.

As we were leaving and walking down the stairs to the entrance of the building Senor Ibanez came up behind and asked Clarke Anderson to stay a minute and speak with him, which Anderson did. The rest of us proceeded to our car in the parking lot outside to await Anderson.

Anderson later told us that Ibanez had held him back to say that he [Ibanez] was completely at our disposal for making any arrangements for lunch or otherwise with Mexican nationals. Clarke Anderson told Ibanez that we appreciated this but that in some instances we might find it rather too informal at a luncheon to transact the kind of business we hoped to do with some of the witnesses. Ibanez replied that in that case he would be happy to set up appointments at his office in the Ministry of the Interior building. Anderson questioned whether this was in line with the kind of non-official atmosphere that Echevarria hoped to create. Ibanez replied that perhaps it

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was not. However, the possibility of using Ibanez' office was not foreclosed.

We then drove directly back to the Embassy, arriving there about noon.

12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.

The three of us plus Scott and Anderson went to Minister Boonstra's office as soon as we arrived at the American Embassy. We reviewed with Boonstra what had occurred with Echevarria. We decided that we would submit the note to the Mexican government that afternoon, if possible, although everyone recognized the difficulty of delivering the note to the proper Mexican officials which was created by the visit of Queen Juliana. Boonstra pointed out that not only was there an official lunch, at which Echevarria was now in attendance, but that a state dinner was planned for that evening. Boonstra requested that we draft the substance of the note immediately and that it then be given to him for shaping into final form.

We then discussed with Boonstra the problem of Silvia Duran. We pointed out that our only interest in witnesses other than Duran was to get their formal testimony for authentication purposes. We did not feel that there was anything we could learn from interrogating them that Mr. Larson and other FBI agents had not already learned. This was not

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true of Duran, however, because she had been interviewed only by the Mexican police and we considered that interview inadequate. (I should point out that we do not consider it totally inadequate, however. It is only on details such as Oswald's physical appearance, side comments or remarks he may have made, etc., that we would like to interrogate Mrs. Duran further. On the essential point of whether or not his contacts with the Embassy consisted of anything other than an attempt to travel to Cuba, Silvia Duran's knowledge has probably been exhausted.) We discussed with Boonstra the best approach to try to speak to Duran. Boonstra frankly stated that at this point it was his opinion that we would not be able to get through to her. He felt that the Mexicans were too politically sensitive to risk having her picked up a third time under arrest and that she, being a communist and especially because her husband was a very militant communist and a very bitter person in general, would not agree to any kind of voluntary appearance. Nevertheless, he [Boonstra] would raise no objection to our attempt to arrange a meeting with her. We therefore agreed that Scott or Anderson would recontact Ibanez and if necessary Echevarria as well to try to arrange a meeting with Silvia Duran. It was pointed out that even though the meeting would have to be "informal" as stated by

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Echevarria, possibly for lunch, we could arrange that the luncheon would be in a private place and that its location would not be disclosed to Mrs. Duran prior to her arrival there. She could be picked up in an Embassy car and driven to some other part of the city. Also, if necessary, the room and/or our persons could be fitted with recording apparatus so that no notes would be necessary and so that proof of what was discussed could be obtained and kept for an indefinite period thereafter.

Boonstra suggested that we consider the use of a "cutout" for Duran. By this he meant that she could be taken to the United States on some unofficial journey, for example, to give her story to an American magazine, and while in the United States she could then appear before the Commission. We discussed the pros and cons of a cutout and decided that it was worth considering, and that we would bring it up at the highest levels of the Commission after we returned to the United States.

The conference with Boonstra lasted only about one-half hour. All of us except Boonstra then retired to room 510, the office which had been assigned to Slawson, Willens and Coleman at the Embassy, and there drafted the note to be sent

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to the Mexican government asking for its official report on the assassination. As soon as the note was drawn up it was delivered back to Boonstra's office and we continued our conference. This conference consisted of a much fuller discussion of the alternatives of getting Duran to testify either to the Commission or to representatives of the Commission. The details, difficulties and possible variations of a "cutout" were gone into by Scott. We also informed Scott and Anderson in detail of the kind of payments which Duran could legitimately expect if she were to journey to Washington, that is, the usual witness fees, her hotel and meal expenses, the hotel and meal expenses for her husband, although he would not get witness fees, and of course the travel expenses for both of them. This conference ended when we decided it was time to break for lunch. It was agreed that Anderson would contact Ibanez to try to work out an immediate follow-up on Duran in Mexico City while we were there, but that any other approaches to Duran, for example, a request to her that she go to Washington or elsewhere in the United States for an appearance before the Commission, the "cutout" approach, etc., would be deferred pending receipt of the outcome of Anderson's conversation with Ibanez.

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2:40 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

After lunch we met in the office of Clarke Anderson. Mr. Anderson was not there, since he was back seeing Ibanez, but we were accompanied by Mr. Larson. Mr. Larson had two documents for us to read. The first was Silvia Duran's signed statement, accompanied by a translation, and the second was a group of reports on the exit of Oswald from Mexico by Transportes del Norte bus.

We also used the occasion to discuss with Larson the best procedures for authenticating the evidence gathered in Mexico. Since the conditions set up by Echevarria were not amenable to our getting direct authentication from the Mexican witnesses involved, we proposed that the FBI agents who had heard the testimony or received the pertinent items of documentary or physical evidence from the Mexicans would themselves be asked to give testimony before a representative of the Commission and, by reference to the source of their materials, indirectly authenticate it. We explained in some detail how this would work and asked Larson to conduct his procedures so as to make later authentication as firm and as easy as possible, and to convey this message to all other FBI agents in the area who were working on the assassination. Coleman, especially, emphasized to Larson the desirability of

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accurately identifying documentary material, by number or other code, and advised him to see that the number of hands through which a document was passed was kept to a minimum and that each document was kept in the custody of a reliable person at all times. Larson gave the impression of readily understanding all this and he of course agreed to our suggestions.

3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

By pre-arrangement we met at 3:30 with Winston Scott. With him again was his assistant, Alan White. The occasion for this meeting was to give us the opportunity to go through all the intercepts carefully and to use them as a basis for reconstructing Oswald's activities insofar as they touched upon the Cuban and Soviet Embassies. This we did, and we then showed White and Scott the result of our work, for their comment. They agreed in every respect with our conclusions. I will not go into great detail here because these conclusions will of course be incorporated in our narrative report on Oswald's activities in Mexico, but in outline the conclusions were as follows:

On Friday, September 27:

Time

10:00 a.m. Flecha Roja bus arrives in Mexico City

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Time

10:37 a.m. Oswald telephoned the Russian Embassy, to get "visas to Odessa."

Sometime later Oswald visits Cuban Consulate.

Some time later still Oswald visits Russian Consulate.

Some time later still, which includes the period 4:05 to 4:26 in the afternoon Oswald visits the Cuban Consulate and during this visit Silvia Duran calls the Russian Consulate and soon thereafter the Russian Consulate telephones her back.

Saturday, September 28:

Time

Morning Oswald visits the Russian Consulate

Some time including 11:51 a.m. Oswald visits the Cuban Consulate and during this visit Silvia Duran phoned the Russian Consulate.

Some time later Oswald probably again visited the Russian Consulate

Tuesday, October 1:

Time

10:31 a.m. Oswald telephones the Russian Embassy and is told to call the Russian Consulate instead.

11:30 a.m. Oswald calls the Soviet Consulate. He is hung up on.

We then discussed the Dorticos-Armas intercepts and examined them in some detail. We asked Mr. Scott for his

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opinion of them and he told us that after re-reading them many times and listening to the tapes in the original he was of the opinion that the President of Cuba was not referring to the fact that money had been passed to Oswald at the Cuban Embassy. He emphasized, however, that the telephone connection was a very bad one -- he said the voices rose and fell extremely, as will sometimes happen on a radio connection on a long distance overseas call -- and he suggested that we have the tapes re-translated by some Spanish-speaking Cuban who is familiar with the dialect of Spanish current on that island, including slang and nuances. He said the tapes were currently with the CIA in Washington and that we could arrange for such a re-translation when we returned. He emphasized, however, that his own opinion was firmly as he just stated it. He suggested the re-translation only as a means of eliminating any doubts which might be in our minds and as a doublecheck on his own opinion which after all, under the circumstances would be in error. Willens asked Scott to ask Richard Helms to begin the process of re-translating these tapes when he, Scott, saw Helms in Washington during the CIA meeting scheduled for the week of April 13. Scott said he would do this.

We then discussed what the Commission could eventually publish to the American public out of all the material we had

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By: mmj NARS, Date: 3/25/76

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received in Mexico and in Washington from the CIA. All of us realized that any decisions arrived at this afternoon could be tentative only, since the final decision would have to be made at the higher echelons of both the CIA and the Commission. Slawson put out the suggestion that the Commission might publish a narrative containing all the detail obtainable from Silvia Duran's statements and from the "open" investigations carried on by FBI agents and Mexican police agents throughout Mexico, supplemented to some extent by the information obtained through the CIA's wire-tapping activities and the CIA's informants. This supplement, however, would not be in detail; rather, for example, it would use phrases like "in the afternoon" in place of "4:05 p.m." Also, no absolute quotes would be used. Only the substance of conversations would be given. The sources for this narrative would be stated to be Silvia Duran's interrogation, the "open" investigations and "other confidential sources considered reliable by the Commission and the federal intelligence agencies involved." Mr. Scott's reply to this suggestion was that he thought it would be acceptable to the CIA. He said that although it involved a certain amount of compromise of his security arrangements, the compromise was acceptable when balanced against the importance of the occasion. We asked whether he felt it would disclose to Russian and Cuban

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intelligence the existence of this particular wire-tapping by the CIA. His reply was that they probably assumed its existence anyway. (It should be noted that the proposal put forward would disclose nothing as to the existence of any photographic observations. Nor, I believe, would it disclose anything that would permit enemy intelligence to discover who the CIA's informants are in Mexico or where they are located.)

We then briefly discussed the statement of Silvia Duran which we had read earlier in the day in the FBI offices. The CIA had not yet seen this statement.

5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The three of us then returned to Clarke Anderson's office. Anderson gave us a report on his meeting with Ibanez. He told us that Ibanez and he had discussed our making arrangements to see Silvia Duran. The outcome of the discussion was that Ibanez himself was very agreeable but said that he would have to clear it with his superior, Echevarria.

6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

We returned to room 510 and on the way there were handed a copy of the formal request to the Mexican Government for its complete report on the assassination. A copy is

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attached to this memorandum. We were told by Mr. Montllor, political officer for the embassy, that although an attempt had been made to deliver the note that afternoon it had failed because all the responsible Mexican officials were out entertaining Queen Juliana. Another attempt would be made at approximately 6:30 p.m. this same day, and if that failed, continuing attempts would be made on Saturday. (We were later informed that the note had been delivered late Saturday morning.)

We took the copy of the note which had been handed to us to Mr. Harry Bergold, Second Secretary in the embassy, and asked him to see that the Commission be informed through channels in Washington of the contents of this note, when it was delivered, what the response was, when the response was received, and in general a full documentation and report on the entire series of transactions. He agreed that he would see that this was done.

SATURDAY - APRIL 11

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Coleman, Willens and Slawson met in room 510 and spent about an hour or slightly more in reviewing what we had accomplished to date and what further work we hoped to get done

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before returning to Washington.

We agreed at this time that there was sufficient work remaining so that Slawson and Willens should stay over at least until Monday afternoon but that unless Ibanez replied to the effect that an interview with Silvia Duran could be arranged shortly, Mr. Coleman was free to return to the United States on Sunday.

12:00 Noon to 3:00 p.m.

After having decided among ourselves what further work had to be done while we were in Mexico, we went to Mr. Anderson's office where we met Mr. Anderson and Rolfe Larson. The following points were covered, with the conclusions as stated:

We asked that the exact time, rather than the scheduled time, upon which Oswald's bus from Nuevo Laredo arrived in Mexico City on Friday, September 27 be ascertained. We pointed out that this could be important in determining whether Oswald immediately began his telephone calls and/or his visits to the embassies or whether he first checked in at his hotel. The FBI agreed to do this.

We reminded Anderson and Larson that we had some items of physical evidence which, although not of prime

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importance, might be helpful in their further investigations, and it was decided that Slawson and Larson would meet early Monday morning to go through these.

We asked that the FBI determine the hours upon which both the Cuban and Russian Consulates were open to the public during the dates when Oswald would have had access to them. Also, if possible, the FBI should determine if it was common practice to stay open later than the normal hours or be open on days such as Saturday when they were not officially open.

Once again we asked Anderson to review the Gutierrez investigation, which he did. We asked if there were any reports either being prepared or that had already been sent to Washington on this matter which we had not yet received. We were told that there were not. The status of the Gutierrez investigation is therefore that the surveillance of the Cuban Embassy will continue indefinitely in an attempt to pick up the automobile which was identified by Gutierrez, all other lines of investigation which any of us could think of seemed to have been followed as far as they led, with so far only negative results.

For purposes of authenticating our Mexican evidence we told Anderson that we would want a list of the names of all the FBI agents who had obtained evidence in Mexico and we

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discussed briefly what would be the most convenient place to have these agents meet with a representative of the Commission for the taking of their depositions. Anderson replied that either Washington or New Orleans would be fine from his point of view. We reviewed with Anderson the procedures which we hoped to follow in authenticating this evidence through the agents, as we had explained it to Larson on Friday, and Anderson agreed that it would be a workable arrangement. In this connection it came out that Oswald's tourist card application, which was made from New Orleans, was not handled by the FBI Mexican office and therefore authenticating it would be a problem to be handled elsewhere. We agreed that we would pursue this when we returned to Washington.

We requested an itemized list of the cost of the items and services that Oswald probably purchased while in Mexico and while traveling to and from Mexico. It was agreed that Slawson and Larson would meet Monday to go through this in detail.

We then discussed the desirability of our obtaining a more complete knowledge of the procedures of the Cuban Embassy, especially as they relate to the practice in granting visas and the different kinds of travel permits which would be

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available to someone in Oswald's circumstances. Likewise, we were interested in learning what obstacles to travel between Mexico and Cuba there might be that derived from the Mexican, rather than the Cuban, authorities. Anderson agreed to give us as full a report on this as he could, but the difficulties are obvious. In general, he told us that, largely at the instigation of the United States government, the Mexican authorities are very strict about Americans traveling between Cuba and Mexico. For example, their passports are stamped "Departed for Cuba on \_\_\_\_\_, 1964" before the traveler gets on an airplane bound for Cuba. Likewise, the Mexican Immigration officials will not permit anyone, whether Mexican or American, to depart for Cuba unless he has the proper Cuban travel permits. No special Mexican travel permit is required for Americans at least, but the Mexican officials indirectly enforce Cuban law by insisting upon complete Cuban documentation. (It should be pointed out that this is unusual. Normally, border officials are concerned only with persons entering their country or with their own nationals who might be leaving.) We pointed out to Anderson that the reason for our concern that we get this information was that we needed it to test the plausibility, and thereby the reliability, of the other evidence we had on what Oswald was doing and trying to do at the Cuban and Soviet Embassies, i.e., we wanted to see whether his activities made

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*m m g* WARS, Date *3/25/76*

sense in the light of the normal Cuban and Mexican procedures.

We then briefly discussed the "two suitcase problem." We related how we had evidence that when Oswald left New Orleans for Mexico he was carrying two suitcases but that all our evidence relating to his travels in Mexico pointed to the fact that he had with him only a single suitcase, a small blue zipper bag. Marina's testimony and the testimony of Mrs. Ruth Paine both tended to confirm the one-suitcase evidence. We said that we did not want the FBI to undertake any kind of search immediately, because we had not yet had an opportunity to re-interrogate our witnesses in New Orleans who had testified to there being two suitcases, but assuming that such re-interrogation confirmed their testimony in this respect, we wondered what kind of searches in or around Laredo, Texas or Nuevo Laredo, Mexico for such a missing suitcase might be practical. Anderson and Larson both felt that the FBI was fully capable of searching Laredo and Nuevo Laredo for a missing suitcase, neither town being so big as to make such a search unreasonably difficult.

We told Anderson that we had not yet come to a firm decision as to whether we would want to bring Albert Osborne to Washington or elsewhere in the United States to testify before the Commission or a representative of the Commission,

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By: [signature] NARS, Date: 3/25/76

even on a voluntary basis. Certainly if he were going to resist testifying and we had to subpoena him, we wanted to think further about it. In the meantime we wondered what the FBI in Mexico could do as to keeping track of Osborne so that we could obtain him on reasonably short notice if we desired to do so in the future. After some discussion of the alternatives open in Mexico, where Osborne was at last report, for "keeping tabs" on an individual, Anderson replied that he would ask the Mexican police to put Osborne on a "two week reporting basis." He felt sure the Mexicans would comply. This means that Osborne, being a person under suspicion and being an alien, is told that he must come into a certain police station and report on a regular basis. Two weeks is a common interval for this sort of thing, but is sometimes even done on a daily basis. A daily reporting schedule is extremely burdensome, however, especially for someone who cannot afford to travel by automobile, as we believe is the case with Osborne, and especially when that person is living far from the police station to which he has to report. If necessary, said Anderson, the Mexican police at our request will order Osborne deported and give us advance warning of when and where he will be pushed across the border. We could then arrange to have someone waiting for him north of the Rio Grande with a subpoena. Anderson of course

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understood that nothing like this should be requested of the Mexicans without first getting our approval.

We then requested that the FBI prepare a large, clear map of Mexico City and mark on it each of the places which have some bearing on Lee Harvey Oswald's actions in the city. This map would then be authenticated and described by one of the FBI agents, probably Larson, at the "authentication meeting" we contemplated holding in New Orleans or Washington. In addition, in the meantime, we would like such a map prepared informally for our own use. Anderson agreed to do this and said that Larson would deliver the informal map to us on Monday.

We inquired whether the FBI in Mexico City had been asked to undertake any investigations of Jack Ruby or persons or incidents related to him. Anderson said that they had not been asked to do so except that they were asked to report anything they knew or could find out on Ruby himself. All they had been able to dig up was one old friend of Ruby's in Guadalajara, who did not have much to say. They had made passenger and immigration checks on travel to and from Cuba for the past few years insofar as such information was still available, but did not find Ruby's name listed.

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We asked Anderson if he had a copy of the "dossier" on Oswald mentioned in the Ambassador Mann file. He replied that he did not have one but assumed that it could be found someplace, since it of course existed at the time, and said that he would forward a copy to us.

We then discussed the Alvarado situation and pointed out that we had never received a final report on him. Anderson replied that his agency had not taken the primary responsibility here but that the CIA had handled this investigation. We agreed that we would bring this up with Winston Scott.

Winston Scott had previously mentioned to us that he thought that Anderson had heard some vague rumors from expatriate American communists in Mexico that might bear on the assassination and suggested we ask Anderson about them. Scott had said that Anderson had spoken with him about this information many weeks before, to inquire whether the CIA could shed any light on it. Accordingly, we brought the subject up with Anderson. Anderson replied that an American expatriate communist named Elizabeth Mora, known in left wing circles in Mexico as "Betty Mora," had made some rather vague assertions about Oswald which, through informants, Anderson's office was

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trying to follow up. For the last month or two, however, Betty Mora had been extremely sick and so this whole line of investigation was temporarily stymied. For several years Betty Mora has not been in good health, and in Anderson's opinion she is not a reliable person anyway, so he did not feel that her assertions would ever amount to much. He promised us a report on them, however, notwithstanding his feeling that they were not to be accorded a great deal of weight.

Finally, we posed the question to Anderson whether he knew of anything further, important or unimportant, which we as representatives of the President's Commission ought to be told. After some thinking and after asking Larson whether he had anything along these lines and receiving a negative response, Anderson replied that he believed he had given us everything he knew.

We then briefly dropped into the CIA's office again and saw Scott and White. We were told by White that the examination of the reels of photographs pertaining to the time periods covering Gutierrez' visits to the Cuban Embassy had been examined and that the results were negative. No automobiles appeared in the photographs and no persons were shown who answered the descriptions given by Gutierrez or who might have been Gutierrez himself. (I will note here that we did

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not ask the CIA to have these photographs displayed directly to Gutierrez. This would of course have been the easiest way of determining whether the person he identified as the Cuban who passed the money to Oswald was shown in one of the photographs, but this would also have involved such a serious breach of CIA security arrangements that we did not believe that it was justified.)

We then asked Scott and White the same question we had asked Anderson about there being any further information we should be given. His answer, concurred in by White, was to the same effect as Anderson's.

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MONDAY, APRIL 13

9:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

At about 9:15 a.m. Mr. Slawson met with Mr. Rolfe Larson and one other FBI agent. Various maps of the Federal District of Mexico (which includes Mexico City) were examined and we agreed that one of the large, clear ones would best serve as the official exhibit for showing the location of various places which Lee Harvey Oswald probably visited while he was in Mexico City. Mr. Larson said that he would have this map appropriately marked and forwarded to the Commission in the near future. For my personal use in the time while the large formal map was being prepared, Mr. Larson delivered to me a smaller map which had these same locations marked on it.

We then went through each of the items of physical evidence which I had taken along to Mexico City. For a description of these items, reference is here made to the "Memorandum for Record" dated 30 March 1964 from W. David Slawson, subject: "Items of Physical Evidence Which May Relate to Oswald's Mexican Trip," a copy of which has been attached to this memorandum.

The three of us agreed that nothing of significance could be discovered by further work in connection with silver identification bracelet inscribed "Marina." Mr. Larson and Mr. Clarke Anderson had previously pointed out that more than 300 silver shops in Mexico City had been questioned as to this bracelet on the basis of a photograph of it and, despite the fact that some minor markings

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might appear on the bracelet itself which did not show up on the photograph, none of the shops had stated that they even sold bracelets of this kind and therefore a re-interview of them would almost certainly again be negative. We also felt that even if the shop should be discovered which sold this bracelet to Lee Harvey Oswald, probably all the owner could tell us would be that Yes, he probably sold the bracelet to someone.

Mr. Larson noted down all the words on the back flyleaf of the Spanish-English dictionary and he also noted the markings on pages 5, 118 and 210 next to various Spanish words. None of us could see any particular help at this time which would come from these writings and markings, but we felt that Mr. Larson at least ought to have them with him.

The Mexican religious medal was felt to be so common as to be probably untraceable and, in addition, from its age we guessed that it may not have been purchased in September 1963 in Mexico City but could perhaps have been imported into the United States and obtained by Oswald some time much earlier, presumably in Dallas or New Orleans.

Mr. Larson noted down all the wording on page 47 of Oswald's address book. He said that he would check each of the telephone numbers and addresses to see if they referred to the embassies and airlines to which they seem to refer and, if they did not, he would find out whose telephone numbers or addresses they were. In addition, he promised to do all he could to find out whether Lee Harvey Oswald had ever shown up at the Cubano Airlines as the address book indicates,

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but this of course will present some difficulties and may not be completely checkable. Except for the matters just mentioned, we could see no further help from the physical exhibits in the Mexican investigation at this point.

I then mentioned to Mr. Larson and the other agent that Marina Oswald had testified to the Commission that Lee Harvey Oswald told her, after he returned from Mexico, that while there he had visited the Cuban and Russian Embassies to do all he could to get to Cuba and had also seen a bull fight, visited some museums and done some sight-seeing. Mr. Larson said that the bull fight arena had already been checked out insofar as possible with the result being that no one there remembers Oswald visiting the arena on the Sunday in question but also that no one there is at all certain that he did not visit the arena. Furthermore, there is a section in the arena set aside for persons who are not formally dressed and therefore Oswald could have got a seat even though he did not carry a coat and necktie with him. It was mentioned in this connection that the jai alai games in Mexico City are strictly reserved for persons who are properly attired and that no man can enter without a necktie. This plus the fact that the ticket taker at the gate, who is a practiced professional informer for the police in Mexico City, says emphatically that Oswald did not appear there, lead us to conclude that Oswald never went to the jai alai games despite the notation in his Spanish-American dictionary indicating that he intended to do so. The fact that he failed to mention anything about the jai alai games to Marina after he returned points toward this same conclusion.



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Rolfe Larson and the other agent were quite interested in Marina's statement that Oswald said he had visited some museums. They felt they knew two museums which under the circumstances Oswald would probably have visited. One of them has a caretaker who takes an especial interest in Americans and it was felt that he might be able to identify Oswald if Oswald had visited there. Mr. Larson and the other agent agreed that they would follow this lead at the earliest opportunity.

I then told Larson that the Commission was interested in establishing as nearly as possible the amount of money spent by Lee Harvey Oswald traveling to and from Mexico City and while he was in the city. In this connection it was agreed that the Mexican office of the FBI would forward to the Commission, through channels, an itemized estimate of Oswald's expenses which would include at least the following items:

1. Bus fare both southbound and northbound in Mexico;
2. The fee for the travel agency, if any, paid by Oswald for his northbound travel reservations;
3. The cost of Oswald's room at the Hotel del Comercio;
4. The approximate food cost, including food he ate while traveling on the buses;
5. Cost of the bull fight in the section in which Oswald probably sat;
6. The cost, if any, of the museums which he visited;
7. Various transportation costs by bus and/or taxicab incurred on the various trips we know he probably made in Mexico City. (By examination of the map of the city we agreed that Oswald probably took a

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Authority CLA Ott, 12/21/78

By M. In. G. NARS, Date 3/25/78

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taxical from his hotel to the neighborhood of the Cuban and Russian Embassies and return, but that he almost certainly walked back and forth between the two embassies once he was in that neighborhood);

8. Various telephone calls (In this connection I told Larson that it would be sufficient for our purposes if the FBI were to furnish us with the cost of a single local call, since we were probably in a better position to figure out how many telephone calls Oswald made than was the FBI); and
9. Purchase of six picture postcards.

Mr. Slawson then went to Mr. Winston Scott's office where he met Mr. Scott's secretary, "Dottie," as arranged by Mr. Scott the previous Saturday. Dottie carried the telephone intercepts into the nearby conference room, handed them over to Mr. Slawson and remained in the room throughout the entire time Mr. Slawson worked on them. Mr. Slawson spent until about 11:30 taking notes from the intercepts, after which he returned them to Dottie. These notes are in the attached memorandum dated April 21, 1964.

Mr. Slawson then returned to the FBI section of the Embassy, where he met Mr. Willens. The two of us held a very brief discussion with Mr. Clarke Anderson in his office. Mr. Willens told Anderson that he, Willens, and Slawson and Coleman as well had been very favorably impressed with the high quality of the FBI officers we had met in Mexico City and with the manner in which they were carrying out their work in connection with the assassination. It was apparent, however, that except for the "Alvarado" investigation, which so far as we could observe had been very thoroughly handled, high-quality

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work in Mexico dated only from about late February, when FBI agents with experience in Mexico had been assigned to the job. Mr. Willens asked why this had not been done at an earlier date.

Mr. Anderson answered that he now agreed that the delay was unfortunate. He said that the thought after the assassination of those in the Embassy who were responsible was that the best results would be achieved by working primarily through the Mexican authorities, who at the time were certainly highly motivated by the desire to clear their country of any involvement by discovering any Cuban or other conspiracy or instigation which might have existed and who appeared reasonably competent. Anderson pointed out that an attempt to throw in our own men at the time might have had adverse political effects and therefore have hindered the over-all effort. But, he admitted, subsequent results, such as the inadequate Hotel del Comercio investigation and the failure of the Mexican police to look beyond the fact that the name "Oswald" appeared on the Transportes Frontera passenger manifest, showed that the Mexican's investigation was not good enough. When that became apparent, said Anderson, the FBI's own men were assigned to the job.

12 o'clock noon until 12:30 p.m.

Later in the morning, at some time about noon, Howard Willens and Mr. Blawson, accompanied by Mr. Clarke Anderson, visited Mr. Boonstra, Minister for Political Affairs at the American Embassy. Two points were discussed with Mr. Boonstra.

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T O P S E C R E T

First, we talked about what might be done at this juncture with Mrs. Silvia Duran, the clerk at the Cuban Embassy who dealt most frequently with Oswald. The Mexican Government, through Mr. Iasis Echevarria, Acting Secretary of the Interior, had declined our suggestion that we ask Mrs. Duran to appear at the American Embassy and when asked specifically about arranging an informal meeting with Duran, Echevarria reacted coolly, although he stopped short of flatly rejecting the suggestion, so we discussed the possibilities of contacting her to ask for her voluntary appearance in Washington, D. C., or elsewhere in the United States to give testimony to the Commission.

Mr. Boonstra personally felt that such an approach to Mrs. Duran might be acceptable politically but he declined to make a firm commitment on the point, saying that the problem was complex and important enough to be resolved at the higher levels of the State Department in Washington. We did decide, however, that the best approach would probably be to send a suitably worded letter to Mrs. Duran, signed by J. Lee Rankin, to the American Embassy in Mexico City for redelivery to Mrs. Duran by registered mail. The Embassy would make whatever arrangements were necessary for seeing that the letter was in fact delivered to her directly. We all agreed that it would probably not be a good idea to include a list of questions in the letter, to be answered in lieu of her personal appearance. It was felt that the questions would constitute too great a risk of being used for propaganda purposes by the Communists or pro-Castro Cuban groups in Mexico City.

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The second problem discussed with Mr. Boonstra was the advisability of the United States Government requesting through Swiss channels that the Cuban government forward its complete file on Lee Harvey Oswald to the Commission. It was pointed out that the testimony of Silvia Duran plus certain other independent evidence available to us indicate strongly that Lee Harvey Oswald actually made out a formal application for a Cuban visa, which presumably is in his handwriting or at least signed by him, and the Cuban government went so far as to act on this application and authorize the issuance of a visa conditional only upon his first obtaining a Russian visa, about 15 days after his visit to the Cuban Embassy. Should these documents be turned over to the Commission, they probably could be independently authenticated through Oswald's handwriting. Mr. Boonstra was inclined to feel that such a request might not only serve the purposes of the Commission but could also be of political benefit to the United States Government. He commented that the Cuban government might choose to comply because it was presently seeking lessening of tension with the United States, and because it might be glad of the opportunity to show that its involvements with Oswald were innocent and fully disclosed by Silvia Duran in her interrogation with the Mexican police. Neither Mr. Boonstra nor Mr. Anderson could think of any material adverse political results which would arise from such a request, since both felt that it was the most natural thing in the world for a government to want to investigate the assassination of its president and such a request would be fully

Authority: COLA 29 Dec 1975

By RAJ NARS, Date 3/25/76

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Name: John T. Wilson / COLA 12/29/75

Agency: E.O. 11652, Sec. 5(B)(2) Date: not determined

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in line with an investigation of this type. Mr. Boonstra here too, however, felt that the ultimate decision should be made in Washington.

12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The last few minutes of Willens' and Slawson's time were taken up saying goodbye to the individuals in the Embassy with whom we had worked and thanking them for their cooperation. We also made some last minute arrangements to have our notes and documentary material, most of which was classified "Confidential" or "Secret," delivered to us in Washington, D. C. by diplomatic pouch. This was to be handled by Mr. Clarke Anderson's office. Once the goodbyes and delivery arrangements were completed we left the Embassy, had lunch and were later met at the Continental Hilton Hotel by Clarke Anderson and Rolfe Larson, who drove us to the airport. We departed on an Eastern Airlines flight for Washington via New Orleans at 3:20 p.m.

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Authority: COLA 29 Dec 1975

By m.m.g. NARS, Date 3/25/76

EXEMPT from automatic declassification per E.O. 11652, Sec. 5(E)(2)

Name: John T. Wilson / COLA 12/29/75

Agency: E.O. 11652, Sec. 5(B)(2) Date: not determined

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No. 1349

The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Relations and has the honor to refer to the official investigation being conducted by the Government of the United States of America into all possible aspects of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, and especially into the activities of the alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald.

The Embassy deeply appreciates the cooperation which Mexican agencies have heretofore extended to the Government of the United States in developing information which could prove pertinent to that official investigation, and it would be additionally helpful if the Government of Mexico could make available to the Embassy as detailed a report as is feasible on the investigation conducted in Mexico by national agencies into the activities of Lee Harvey Oswald during the time that he is known to have been in Mexico.

The Embassy would also be most appreciative if the report should include a description of those measures which the Government of Mexico may have taken immediately upon hearing of the assassination of President Kennedy, such as special vigilance at points of

entry, and other steps related to the aftermath of the assassination.

The Embassy wishes to assure the Ministry of Foreign Relations that whatever report is made available to it by the Government of Mexico will not be made public without first obtaining the approval of the Government of Mexico.

The Embassy of the United States avails itself of this occasion to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Relations the assurances of its highest and most distinguished consideration.

Embassy of the United States of America,

Mexico, D. F., April 10, 1964.