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DD/O 77-10014

LA/CO/266-77

11 NOV 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Office of the Legislative Counsel

VIA: SA/ADDO

FROM: Raymond A. Warren
Chief, Latin America Division

SUBJECT: Allegation by a Senior Cuban Diplomat
Concerning the Role of Cuban Exiles in
the Assassination of President Kennedy

REFERENCE: LA/CO/258-77 Dated 3 November 1977

1. Reference is made to the referent memorandum which reported a statement made by a senior Cuban diplomat abroad alleging that "Cuban exiles such as DIAZ Lanz (fno) (sic) and others had been involved in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy." We have received nothing further to date to supplement this information.

2. DDO records indicate that Pedro DIAZ Lanz, and his brother Marcos DIAZ Lanz, formerly Chief and Deputy Chief, respectively, of the Cuban Revolutionary Air Force, entered the U.S. from Cuba as exiles in mid-1959. Since that time both DIAZ Lanz brothers reportedly have been closely associated with, and involved in numerous activities with, Frank STURGIS (aka FIORINI) of Watergate fame. Although the individual allegedly involved in the assassination of President Kennedy could be either of the DIAZ Lanz brothers, it is noted that the name Pedro DIAZ Lanz had been cited in recent newspaper items in this connection. We refer specifically to the New York Daily News article of 20 September 1977 entitled "Ex-Spy Says She Drove to Dallas With Oswald & Kennedy 'Assassin Squad'," a copy of which is attached. The Agency assisted in the evacuation of Marcos from Cuba to Miami, and Pedro entered the U.S. on his own. Although both were debriefed by the Agency, there is no indication that they were ever considered Agency assets.

signed
Raymond A. Warren
Raymond A. Warren

Attachment:
Newspaper Article

cc: IG Staff

201-259120

WARNING NOTICE

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SUBJECT: Allegation by a Senior Cuban Diplomat
Concerning the Role of Cuban Exiles in
the Assassination of President Kennedy

DDO/LA/CO/C.Hopkins:gm 10 November 1977 x1491

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BASED ON: [REDACTED] 22950 (IN 416072), 28 September 1977
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2/90

Ex-Spy Says She Drove To Dallas With Oswald & Kennedy 'Assassin Squad'

By PAUL NISKIL

A former spy says that she accompanied Lee Harvey Oswald and an "assassin squad" to Dallas a few days before President Kennedy was murdered there Nov. 22, 1963. The House Assassinations Committee is investigating her story.

Maria Lorenz, former undercover operative for the CIA and FBI, told The News that her companions on the car trip from Miami to Dallas were Oswald, CIA contact agent Frank Sturgis, Cuban exile leaders Orlando Bosch and Pedro Diaz Lora, and two Cuban brothers whose names she does not know.

She said they were all members of Operation 40, a secret group the group originally formed by the CIA in 1959 in preparation for the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Statements she made to The News and to a federal agent were reported by Robert Blakey, chief counsel of the Assassinations Committee. He has assigned one of his top investigators to interview her.

Ms. Lorenz described Operation 40 as an "assassination squad" consisting of about 30 anti-Castro Cubans and their American advisers. She claimed the group conspired to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and President Kennedy, whom it blamed for the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

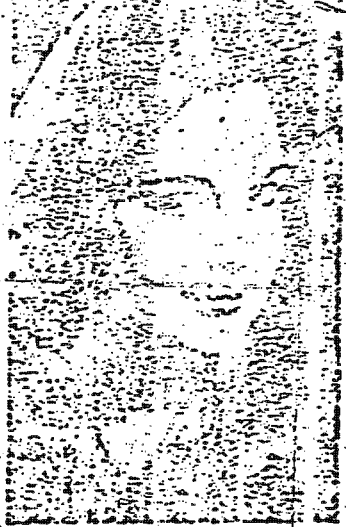
Admitted Talking Post

Sturgis admitted in an interview two years ago that he took part in Operation 40. "There are reports that Operation 40 had an assassination squad," he said. "I'm not saying that personally, but they would kill if they had to."

Except for Oswald, who was accused of murdering Kennedy, none of the men named by Ms. Lorenz has been linked to the President's death.

Ms. Lorenz said she first met Oswald, whose she knew only as "Odie," when he called at an Operation 40 "bathhouse" in Miami's Little Havana section in the summer or early fall of 1963. She said she asked Sturgis who the stranger was and he replied: "He's OK, he's one of us."

She said Oswald later visited an Operation 40 training camp in the Florida Everglades. The next time she saw him, Ms. Lorenz said, was at midnight meeting in the Miami beach of Orlando Bosch, who is now in a Venezuelan



Maria Lorenz
Former CIA agent

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cars soon after the meeting. They took turns driving, she said, and the 1970-mile trip took about two days. She added that they carried weapons — "rifles and scopes" — in the cars.

When they reached Dallas, she said, they all checked into a motel. The Cubans didn't want a woman on the job, Ms. Lorent continued, "so I flew back to Miami the next day."

"And two days later I was on a plane to New York when the copilot announced that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas," she said.

Informed of her story, Sturgis told The News yesterday: "To the best of my knowledge, I never met Oswald."

He said he has known Bosch and Diaz Lanz for many years and "I believe she (Ms. Lorent) may have been at my house one time when they were there." Sturgis also said he had been in Dallas several times before the assassination, but he insisted that he was not there alone and was not there around the time Kennedy was killed. On Nov. 22, he said, "I was home in Miami with my family and I watched the whole thing on TV."

Sturgis said he had been questioned already about the assassination by the Senate Watergate Committee, the Senate Intelligence Committee, the House Assassination Committee and by former Vice President Nelson Rockefeller's commission that investigated the CIA.

"I told them all that I had nothing

to do with a conspiracy to kill Kennedy and I volunteered to take lie-detector tests," Sturgis said.

He added that he had given the committee's evidence that there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy and that "Castro, the Cubans and certain Americans" were behind it.

Sturgis reportedly recruited Ms. Lorent for the CIA in 1959 while he was living with Castro in Havana. She later fled Cuba but returned on two secret missions. The first was to steal papers from Castro's suite in the Hotel Nacional; the second mission was to kill him with a poison capsule, but it dissolved while concealed in a jar of cream.