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JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

27 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy

SUBJECT: Discussion Between Chairman Khrushchev and
Mr. Drew Pearson re Lee Harvey Oswald

1. This will amplify my telephonic remarks to you on 25 May, during which I informed you that Mr. and Mrs. Drew Pearson had had a 45-minute conversation in Cairo on 24 May with Chairman Khrushchev.

2. [redacted] has reported a conversation which he and his wife held with Mr. and Mrs. Drew Pearson in Cairo on 24 and 25 May. [redacted]

[redacted] Nothing in the cable quoted below should be construed as obviating any desirability the Commission may feel about securing testimony directly from Mr. and Mrs. Pearson. We are forwarding it to you solely for the purpose of placing in your hands at the earliest moment the information which has been provided to us in this privileged fashion.

3. The message from [redacted] reads as follows:

"Mrs. Drew Pearson provided on the evening of 24 May the first information on the Oswald portion of the conversation with Chairman and Mrs. Khrushchev. Mrs. Khrushchev opened the conversation by inquiring about Mrs. Kennedy and expressing concern about and affection for her. Mrs. Pearson reassured her, saying that Mrs. Kennedy had borne up remarkably well and was in good health. (Most of this conversation was in English which Mrs. Khrushchev speaks fairly well, with some assistance from Khrushchev's interpreter, who had served in the past as interpreter for the Pearsons and who helped arrange the meeting.) This led into Mrs. Khrushchev's inquiry about their mutual friend, the wife of Chief Justice Warren, and thence into

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mention of the Warren Commission. Chairman Khrushchev then joined the conversation, expressing sorrow at the assassination and also inquired about Mrs. Kennedy. Thereupon he asked Mr. Pearson, 'What really happened?' Mr. Pearson said in effect that the whole affair had taken place just as had been reported in the newspapers and presumably by the Soviet Ambassador in Washington. Chairman Khrushchev was utterly incredulous and his attitude was characterized by Mrs. Pearson as being archetypical 'of every European I have ever talked to on this subject'. That is, that there was some kind of conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy and then murder the assassin with the Dallas Police Department being an accessory. Mrs. Pearson got the impression that Chairman Khrushchev had some dark thoughts about the American Right Wing being behind this conspiracy although Chairman Khrushchev did not articulate this in any clear fashion. Mrs. Pearson was a bit vague on this point in distinguishing between what Chairman Khrushchev said and what she thought he believed. When Mr. Pearson said that we Americans are peculiar people, it understandable that foreigners had difficulty comprehending this fantastic episode, but in fact Oswald was mad, had acted on his own, ditto Ruby, Chairman Khrushchev said flatly that he did not believe this. He said he did not believe that the American security services were this inept. Mr. Pearson again said he agreed this was hard to believe but the facts were as they appeared. Mrs. Khrushchev also expressed disbelief and reiterated her affection for Mrs. Kennedy. Mrs. Pearson repeated that the reaction of Chairman Khrushchev and his wife was one of flat disbelief and archetypical of the universal European belief that there was some kind of American conspiracy behind the assassination of President Kennedy and the murder of Oswald. Chairman and Mrs. Khrushchev could not believe that the affair had happened as it apparently did and Mr. Pearson made no headway whatever in trying to change their belief that something was not on the level. Chairman Khrushchev greeted Mr. and Mrs. Pearson's efforts with a tolerant smile. The conversation then drifted into Chairman Khrushchev's friendly comments about President Johnson.

"On the morning of 25 May, Mr. Pearson referred on passant to the Oswald portion of the conversation,

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saying that Chairman Khrushchev was completely convinced that the true story of the Kennedy assassination has not come out. Mr. Pearson said somewhat ruefully, 'I couldn't make a nickel with Khrushchev on this one.' He gave the impression that Chairman Khrushchev's attitude was one of complete skepticism as to the public version rather than being one of holding concrete ideas as to exactly what happened.

"On the evening of 25 May, Mr. and Mrs. Pearson, in discussing the Khrushchev talk, made another passing reference to the fact that Chairman and Mrs. Khrushchev are convinced that the public version of the affair is not true and that nothing they could say altered this belief."

(Signed) Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Deputy Director for Plans

cc: Mr. John A. McCone
Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Mr. Richard H. Davis ✓

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