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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

→ J. Mahoney
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a copy

10 June 1976

Mr. William G. Miller
Staff Director
Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities
Room G-308
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Bill:

Forwarded herewith are comments on the draft report of the Senate Select Committee's subcommittee on the question of support by the intelligence agencies for the Warren Commission inquiry. These comments have been prepared under a tight deadline, which has limited the ability to research all the questions raised in the draft report.

The attachments to this letter are in two sections. The first is a summary of considerations relating to the relationship between CIA and AMLASH/1 prior to the assassination of President Kennedy on 22 November 1963. The point is that the record of what was said to AMLASH/1, and specific reporting of what he understood, makes it clear that there were no grounds for him to believe, and he did not believe, that he had CIA support for an assassination plot against Castro in the period preceding President Kennedy's death. The second attachment is an item-by-item series of comments, ranging from minor editorial notations and comments, to factual corrections and security points.

As there is a basic difference between the interpretation of facts in the draft report, and the facts as we know them, it would be appreciated if there could be an opportunity to address the question with the members of the Subcommittee. It is my opinion that it would be a disservice to the public to issue the report as now written.

Sincerely,

S. D. Breckinridge
Deputy Inspector General

Attachments:
As stated

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AMLASH Operation

The objective of the AMLASH operation throughout its existence was the formation of a nucleus within Cuba to organize an internal coup to replace the Castro regime. AMLASH/1 held a position high in the Cuban government. He was disillusioned with the Castro regime and was considered as a possible political action asset. The Agency had a series of meetings with him during the 1961-62 period, the last of which was in August 1962 prior to his departure for Havana. He was never a fully recruited agent.

In September 1963 AMLASH/1 was met in Brazil, the first time since the August 1962 meetings. During the September 1963 meeting with AMLASH/1, he said that there were two ways to effect a coup; through an outside invasion (which he recognized was out of the question at that time) or through an "inside job" (i.e. internal coup via military overthrow). He indicated that he was waiting for a plan of action from the United States Government. By this he meant high-level assurances of support for a successful coup. The same cable which reported the results of the meeting also indicated that AMLASH/1 "will always be a control problem."

AMLASH/1 then went to Paris, France, where he was met again. Meetings with AMLASH/1 in October 1963 consisted of exploration as to what he might do, and requests by him for U.S. support. In response to his seeking high-level assurances of U.S. support, Desmond FitzGerald met with him on 29 October 1963. The plan for that meeting is described in writing in the file as follows:

> "FitzGerald will represent self as personal representative of Robert F. Kennedy who traveled Paris for specific purpose meeting (AMLASH/1) and giving him assurances of full U.S. support if there is change of the present government in Cuba." (Emphasis added).

A memorandum for the record of that meeting, dated 13 November 1963, contained the following summary:

> "FitzGerald informed (AMLASH/1 that the United States is prepared to render all necessary assistance to any anti-communist Cuban group which succeeds in neutralizing the present Cuban leadership and assumes sufficient control to invite the United States to render the assistance it is prepared to give. It was emphasized that the above support will be forthcoming only after a real coup has been effected and the group involved is in a position to request U.S. (probably under OAS auspices) recognition and support. It was made clear that the U.S. was not prepared to commit itself to supporting an isolated uprising, as such an uprising can be extinguished in a matter of hours if the present government is still in control in Havana. As for the post-coup period, the U.S. does not desire that the political clock be turned back but will support the necessary economic and political reforms which will benefit the mass of the Cuban people." (Emphasis added).

In 1967 the Inspector General of CIA conducted an investigation of the AMLASH operation, and interviewed Mr. FitzGerald and his executive officer (who had been kept thoroughly familiar with developments). FitzGerald recalled that AMLASH/1 spoke of the need for an assassination weapon, particularly a high powered rifle with telescopic sights or some other weapon which could be used to kill Castro from a distance. FitzGerald rebuffed this request and instructed the case officer who served as an interpreter to tell AMLASH/1 that the U.S. simply did not do such things. FitzGerald's executive officer, though not present, had the same recollection. Mr. FitzGerald assured AMLASH/1 of full U.S. support "if there is a change of the present leadership."

The 13 November memorandum also stated that:

> "Nothing of an operational nature was discussed at the FitzGerald meeting. After the meeting (AMLASH/1) stated that he was satisfied with the policy discussion but now desired to know what technical support we could provide him."

On 14 November 1963 a Cuban exile in New York (the source of the original introduction to AMLASH/1) stated to a CIA case officer that AMLASH/1, while: "...satisfied...as far as policy was concerned, ...was not at all happy with the fact that he still was not given the technical assistance for the operational plan as he saw it...He could not understand why he was denied certain small pieces of equipment which permitted a final solution to the problem, while, on the other hand, the U.S. Government gave much equipment and money to exile groups for their ineffective excusions..." The report of that meeting also stated: "...if he does not get advice and material from a U.S. Government technician, he will probably become fed-up again and we will lose whatever progress we have made to date."

On 19 November 1963 a CIA memorandum records FitzGerald's approval of a cache for AMLASH/1 inside Cuba, with high-powered rifles and scopes. During the period following 19 November, and prior to a meeting in Paris on 22 November, a ballpoint pen was rigged as a hypodermic syringe with which AMLASH/1 could administer a poison. The case officer arrived in Paris on 22 November 1963 and met with AMLASH/1 on that date. AMLASH/1 was shown the ballpoint pen device but did not accept it. He also was told of the arms cache he would be provided.

The record is quite clear that AMLASH/1 had no grounds, prior to 22 November 1963, to believe that he had any support from the United States for operations involving the assassination of Fidel Castro. In fact, he had no advance support for a coup, however he might attempt it. This is emphasized by his recorded complaints on the subject, clearly reflecting his understanding that such was the case. His complaint on 14 November 1963, as reported through an intermediary, may have led to the decision on 19 November 1963 to provide him with

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token support that he could interpret as the support he had been requesting unsuccessfully. That decision was taken 19 November 1963 inside CIA Headquarters by FitzGerald and formalized by a memorandum written the same date.

Prior to 22 November 1963 CIA had refused to give AMLASH/1 any support prior to a successful coup in Cuba. That he recognized that this specifically included a refusal to participate in the assassination of Castro is reflected in the description of a July 1964 report by the FBI, quoted in the SSC Subcommittee draft, in which AMLASH/1 stated that Robert F. Kennedy had refused support for the assassination of Castro. As the 29 October meeting with FitzGerald is the one at which he understood he was meeting with a representative of Robert F. Kennedy, it confirms the description in the 1967 IG Report.

Whatever the relationship with AMLASH/1 after 22 November, the evidence is unequivocal that AMLASH/1 had no grounds prior to that for believing that he had CIA support for his vaguely defined course of action. He knew nothing that, had it leaked, would have served to motivate a Cuban retaliatory strike against President Kennedy.

Finally, it is significant that the transcripts of AMLASH/1's 1966 trial contain no reference to his activities prior to 1964; i.e., before President Kennedy's assassination. The transcripts suggest that, to the Cubans' knowledge, AMLASH/1 was not in touch with CIA before November 1964. Nor did the book which Castro provided to Senator McGovern in 1975, which purported to be an inventory of all known plots against Castro's life, contain any allegation of AMLASH/1 anti-Castro activity prior to late 1964. The book mentions travel by AMLASH/1 to Madrid "where he was recruited by CIA agents." This travel occurred in November 1964. The above two instances strongly suggest that Castro was not aware that AMLASH/1 had any contact with CIA prior to November 1964; i.e., one year after President Kennedy's death.

The reported AMLASH/1 notoriety in the Miami Cuban exile community did not occur prior to President Kennedy's death. This developed after the 1966 trial and to some degree after AMLASH/1 met with Cuban exile leaders in Madrid in late 1964 and early 1965. This was after AMLASH/1 was informed in 1964 that the U.S. Government had severed its relationship with him.

The most recent information available indicates that AMLASH/1 is still in jail, where he is serving a thirty year sentence.

Item Comments on Draft Report of SSC Subcommittee

Page 2. Line 11. The word "agents" may describe FBI employees, but it is not a term ordinarily applied to CIA staff employees.

Page 7. 2nd complete paragraph, 2d line. The phrase "backed by CIA," in describing the Bay of Pigs operation, is imprecise. CIA was the government instrument for conducting the operation, but there was considerable other participation in what was an operation "backed" by the U.S. government.

Page 8. The statement that the FBI knew about these plots by at least May 1962 needs some elaboration. These plots (assassination) did not involve AMLASH/1 at that time, and what the FBI knew may have been about aspects of contacts, the nature of which it did not know. (Need this be reconciled with the statement at page 12 giving the date of FBI's learning whatever it learned in July 1964?)

2nd and 3d paragraphs. It is noted that operational activity in June 1963--the date given--was that there was no activity with the criminal Syndicate (this having been ended several months earlier), and there had been no contact with AMLASH/1 since August 1962. Statements by Castro about "terrorists" had to apply to other activities.

Paragraph at bottom of page (continuing over to page 9). References by Castro (12 September 1963) to "covert activities" undoubtedly referred to not-so-covert activity of MONGOOSE.

Page 9. Bottom of page, speaking of 29 October 1963 meeting between AMLASH/1 and Fitzgerald, the draft report

says ". . . within weeks of this meeting CIA escalated the level of its covert operations, telling AMLASH the United States supported his plan."

This misrepresents what AMLASH/1 was told at the 29 October 1963 meeting, which was that he would receive no support unless he was successful in a coup of his own. There is no planning relationship between the inconclusive status of the understanding with AMLASH/1 and what was going on under MONGOOSE.

Page 10. "Oswald contacted a known KGB agent" with the Soviet Embassy in Mexico. While it is known that Oswald contacted the Vice Consul at the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City, it is believed that it was for the purpose of obtaining a visa for the Soviet Union. The fact that the Vice Consul happened to be a KGB officer complicates the matter but there is no evidence that Oswald knew this Soviet was KGB. Therefore, recommend this sentence be modified accordingly.

Page 12. "Hoover and other senior officials first learned of plots to assassinate Castro in July 1964." Did they?

Page 14. "Moreover, there is evidence that CIA's investigators made requests for files which should have given knowledge of the AMLASH operation, but for some reason they did not acquire that knowledge."

A quick review of CI Staff files, in the time available for this review, disclose no requests that, of themselves, would produce information on the AMLASH operation.

Page 15. The draft report raises the question of what was furnished investigators, which raises the question of what was requested, by whom? (See comment on item on page 14).

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Of course, the reference to especial relevance of the AMLASH operation in this context is questioned.

Page 21. Draft report states that President Kennedy did "admit that the Bay of Pigs invasion was in fact an operation sponsored by the CIA." Our impression was that he accepted this responsibility as his, for a government program. How and in what forum was the stated admission?

Page 27.
(numbered 29)

Speaking of renewal of contact with AMLASH/1 the draft says ". . . the exact purpose the CIA had for renewing contact is not known, but there is no evidence that CIA intended at this time to use AMLASH in an assassination operation.

When AMLASH came out of Cuba in September 1963, it was the first chance since August 1962 to see him. Recontact needed no mysterious "exact purpose." It is correct to state that there was "no evidence" of intent to use him as an assassination operation; rather, the circumstances that followed suggest just the opposite.

Footnote: The case officer did not say, as stated in the draft, that the basis for meeting with AMLASH was the belief of AMLASH that the first step of any coup was assassination. While AMLASH's views were known, as shown by the evidence his views were rejected at least during the critical period.

Page 29. The opinion expressed in the draft report, in relation to the Harker interview, about "AMLASH not being a terrorist," is correct. Should it be reconciled with statements on Page 8?

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The report also says, here, "none of this other activity would seem to warrant Castro's associating that activity with U. S. leaders to the extent that he would threaten the safety of American leaders aiding the plans." We note without exception.

Page 33. Footnote *. The Cuban Coordinating Committee was a group for coordinating implementation of established programs. By memorandum of 22 May 1963, McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to President Kennedy for National Security Affairs, designated the State Department Coordinator of Cuban Affairs as Chairman of the Interdepartmental Committee on Cuba with the specific responsibility for the coordination of day-to-day actions regarding Cuba. Membership of the Committee consisted of representatives from State, USIA, DoD, CIA, Justice, Treasury and ad hoc representatives as necessary.

Footnote **. This seems to indicate that the FBI learned of CIA's operations on 10 October 1963 (a new date?) and that this led to termination of the AMLASH operation. Of course, that happened much later.

Page 34. "Special Affairs Staff" should read "Special Activities Staff."

Page 41. SASICI should read SAS/CI.

Page 47. Testimony of Karamessines is quoted, in which he is asked a hypothetical question about use of AMLASH, and that he answered hypothetically, but the presentation seems to treat it as fact.

Page 53. [redacted]

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The draft report states that an overseas Station raised a question of AMLASH security. This is taken out of context. Consideration had been given to the possibility of using AMLASH/1 in the recruitment of a prospective agent in another European country. This prospective agent frequently traveled to Soviet Bloc countries and recently had returned. The cable noted that the prospective agent appeared less recruitable since his return and the Station felt that the use of AMLASH to recruit the agent might pose a serious threat to AMLASH's personal security. It did not, in any manner, reflect on the security of the AMLASH operation.

Pages 56-57.

The 8 December 1963 cable from JMWAVE was in reply to two cables sent from Headquarters on 7 December 1963 which clarified the reason for the delay in laying down the cache. AMLASH had been assured that he would be given time to re-establish his normal pattern and assess the atmosphere and feelings among his contacts. He was also told that there would be no activity until January 1964. Further, the Standing Group was to meet on 10 December 1963 to discuss US policy toward Cuba and Latin America. If the Standing Group decided to recommend a change in then current policy toward Cuba the conduct of operations that might be counter to any recommended change in US policy objectives should not be under way.

Page 65. Did the FBI learn the "details" of the AMLASH operation in July 1964? They learned of AMLASH's unhappiness with his failure to get what he asked, but what else did they learn beyond the fact of the relationship?

Pages 76-78.

This portion of the report makes reference to use of the polygraph on "D" (also revealed in true name at

page 78) in checking his story. This is considered a sensitive operational method, and deletion of use of the polygraph in the interrogation is requested.

It seems interesting that this fabrication, which proved to be an untrue report, receives so much attention in the report. It really became a non-story, although time was required to check it out.

Page 79. The FBI was not denied access to "D". As the basis for the statement is not known, it is not known in what context the understanding developed. The Mexicans did make "D" available for interrogation, at which the FBI was present.

Page 104. The draft report states that CI Staff was not "affiliated with CIA's Cuban affairs staff," although later in the piece it refers to SAS' CI people coordinating with CI Staff. These appear contradictory statements.

Page 113. Re the case of a man crossing the Mexican border on 23 November then flying to Cuba. This case was investigated and pertained to Gilbert Lopez, a U.S. citizen who had secured a fifteen day Mexican tourist card at Tampa, Florida, on 20 November 1963. He entered Mexico on this document at Neuvo Laredo on 23 November 1963. He checked into the Roosevelt Hotel on 25 November 1963. On 27 November he checked out of the hotel and departed for Havana aboard a regularly scheduled Cubana Flight #465. He had a courtesy visa to visit Cuba. This was a scheduled international flight and he happened to be, according to the manifest, the only passenger.

Page 120. It is requested that CIA support for [redacted] This is still considered as classified. It is noted that CIA did not have an operational interest in SNFE or Alpha 66.

Page 122. [redacted]

Page 129. That the SAS Executive Officer views the AMLASH operation as having been an assassination plot is not very helpful, unless the time sequence and evolution of the relationship with AMLASH/1 is made a part of that view. His account in 1967 supported FitzGerald's story of what happened in the 29 October 1963 meeting.

That SAS/CI speaks broadly may not be all that helpful either, if the extent of his knowledge, and when he knew what he says he knew, is fixed in time. That he wrote a memorandum in 1965 on the security of the operation, does not qualify him to address where things stood in 1963. In fact, he is quoted at page 139 as saying that he could not recall the time frame.

Page 133. The draft report states that in October 1963 the FBI knew of the "assassination aspect of the AMLASH" operation. As is noted earlier, there was no such characterization that applied to it then, so how it could have known is subject to question.

Page 134. Comments have been made earlier on the significance of the FBI's July 1964 report.

Page 135. It is difficult to see how a "desk officer" who was unaware of the AMLASH operation at the time, and did not learn of it until he was told while testifying (as characterized to him by the questioners), could have a very relevant understanding of the operation. Yet he is quoted as an authoritative source.

Page 137. The opinion of the SAS Executive Officer as to the irony of the 22 November 1963 meeting does not alter the relevance of the facts as to what the substantive sequence of the operational relationship had been.

Page 138. While the point is noted only in passing, that AMLASH/1 may have been a provocateur, it is noted that it would have been strange logic for Castro to have sent him out to stimulate an assassination plot against himself and then used the result of his own provocation as the motive for dispatching an assassin. And then jail his own provocateur for what is now some ten years. No evidence supports this thesis.

Page 139. SAS/CI states he cannot recall the time frame, while the sequence of events in development of the operational relationship is a key factor in evaluating the present issue.

Page 141-145.

The citation of 1964 events that do not specifically relate back to the critical 1963 period have dubious relevance to consideration of the problem, or fixing of the sequence of events. The same seems to apply to 1965 events.

It is observed that "A" did make statements, but that the polygraph was inconclusive. In any event, the use of the polygraph should be deleted, because of its use in checking the credibility of operational contacts. Request that reference be made to questioning or interrogation, without this specific identification.

Page 161. The 1967 IG report did not consider the issue of when the operational relationship with AMLASH/1 developed to the point where AMLASH/1 could feel he had CIA support for his plans. It simply dealt with events as they unfolded. The report was used as a primary source for the brief capsulized summary of the AMLASH operation that preceded this detailed series of comments.

General. It is requested that reference to cables follow the general practice employed in the SSC report on alleged assassination plots. The date the cable was sent, the quoted portion, and the country of origin should suffice. Specific reference to a CIA "Station" should be deleted; specific designation of a CIA station in a given city can create undesirable difficulties. References to IN and OUT numbers, or DIR numbers, and to the date and time group of a cable, provide information that is subject to hostile communications analysis and should be removed. This technique for treating cables permits the basic story to be told without providing unnecessary and harmful, from a security point of view, information. Instances in the draft presenting the question were noted at pages 41, 46, 49, and 57. In addition, although JMWAVE has already been identified officially in SSC published reports, the basic treatment of communications cited in relation to that Station should otherwise receive similar technical treatment; see pages 19, 19a, 56, 106 and 138.

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