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Legat Havana (92-11)

RE: AMERICAN GAMBLING ACTIVITIES IN CUBA  
92-2867C

Meyer Lansky's participation in Havana, Cuba, gambling activities dates back at least to the 1930's although his tenure there may not have been continuous since that time. There have been a number of press articles in which it was alleged that in effect Lansky is President Batista's unofficial "czar" of gambling. Lansky has been in NYC recently and while there was picked up by the NYCPD and questioned concerning the Anastasia murder according to the press. He is stated to have been charged with vagrancy and released on \$1,000 bond. This charge was later dismissed. Also, in press reports Interior Minister Santiago Rey of Cuba is quoted as stating that Lansky will not be readmitted to Cuba and that the Cuban Government will take steps to prevent the entrance of persons wanted by other countries for criminal activities. (S) m

The Legal Attache at Havana, Cuba, has received information indicating the possibility that Meyer Lansky is "well wired" with high political figures in Cuba. Potential Criminal Informant Goffredo Cellini who is associated with Meyer and Jake Lansky at the Hotel Nacional casino has related to the Attache that a representative of Andres Rivero Aguero, Cuban Prime Minister, had been in touch with Jake Lansky. Rivero Aguero has frequently been mentioned as the candidate of the Cuban Government coalition parties to succeed President Batista in elections scheduled to be held in June, 1958. Rivero Aguero's representative, Suarez Rivas, advised Jake Lansky that Rivero Aguero had indicated that for a contribution of \$3,000 a month from each of the casinos at the Hotels Nacional, Havana Rivera and Capri, Meyer Lansky could be assured of encountering no difficulty with the Cuban Government. The informant said that Jake Lansky indicated that he would not "sit still for the shakedown" and simply refused to pay any sum at all to Suarez Rivas for Rivero Aguero. Informant said that he got the impression from Jake Lansky that the latter apparently believed that his brother, Meyer, was sufficiently well connected with the Cuban Government and so had no desire to start lining the pockets of the potential candidates for the Presidency. The informant in this matter was in a good position to obtain the foregoing information in view of the fact that he acted as interpreter between Suarez Rivas and Jake Lansky. (S) m

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If reports are true that Cliff Jones is "fronting" in the Havana Hilton for Meyer Lansky, Lansky's connection in that group could conceivably be indicative of good political connections in Cuba. One of the group, Roberto Mendosa, has a brother Mario, who is a prominent lawyer and reputedly is legal adviser to the Cuban Government. (S)u

Legal Attache, Havana, has advised that FCI Cellini has advised that a meeting of important people was held in Havana on 1/31/58 concerning the gambling casino to be operated in the Havana-Hilton Hotel. Cliff Jones was expected to be at the meeting. (S)u

Another source advised that on the same date, 1/31/58, Jake Lansky was meeting with Meyer Lansky in the latter's apartment. It is known that the automobile of Santo Trafficante, Jr., was at the apartment house in which Meyer Lansky resides on that same date. It is also noted that Frank Erickson, New York top hoodlum, was in Havana on 1/31/58 and it is possible he may have attended any meeting that was held. (S)u

The Miami Office was advised on 2/28/58 by former SA Madala that he had received information which he considers reliable that the following individuals are going to take over the casinos and other gambling activities in the Havana-Hilton Hotel at the time it opens, 3/18/58: (S)u

Joe Silesi, wa. Joe Rivers;  
Frank "Red" Reed, a gambler out of NYC;  
Max Schnertzler, wa. Max Courtney;  
Charles Brudner, wa. Charles Broad, NYC gambler. (S)u

All offices should remain constantly alert for pertinent information with reference to American gambling activities in Cuba and should promptly report any information received. (S)u

~~SECRET~~