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Antonio Vercano

~~APPROVED FOR RELEASE 1993
CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM~~

21 JAN 1977
LA/COG/021-77

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations
FROM : Raymond A. Warren
Chief, Latin America Division

SUBJECTS : A. Jack Anderson 20 January 1977 Column
Titled "CIA Tied to False Oswald Story"
B. Identification of the Mr. X in the
Anderson Column

1. The attached column, citing the testimony of a Mr. X, alleges that a CIA agent tried to link Oswald to Cuban intelligence officers in Mexico. There is, of course, no substance to the column's allegations. The column identifies the source as Mr. X because of attempts on his life, but subsequently gives enough information on Mr. X to establish his identity.

2. According to the Anderson column, Mr. X was first met by his CIA contact in Havana before relations with U.S./Cuba were severed. Mr. X had helped to organize bank accountants to embezzle Cuban government funds to finance anti-Castro causes. Mr. X was reportedly recruited by a Morris Bishop (CIA contact), to plan an attempt on Castro's life. The plan was to fire a bazooka from a nearby apartment building while Castro was delivering one of his marathon speeches. According to the Anderson column, the plot was discovered by Castro's police and Mr. X escaped to Miami. Mr. X also reportedly tried to assassinate Castro in Chile in 1971 in league with the Venezuelan Luis Posada Carriles, who is now being detained in Caracas for the 6 October Cubana airline bombing. The Anderson column ends with the report that Mr. X worked for CIA until 1973 for expenses, but was paid \$253,000 in cash by Morris Bishop when he was terminated.

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3. From the above description of Mr. X, it is reasonably clear that Mr. X is Antonio Carlos VECIANA Blanch (201-312966): VECIANA, an assistant bank manager and past president of a public accountants association in Havana, first contacted CIA in Havana ⁰³ in December 1960 when he asked the COS, at that time [redacted] to help in an assassination plot against Castro. VECIANA asked for visas for ten relatives of the four men assigned to kill Castro, and also requested four MI rifles with adapters for grenades plus eight grenades. The COS did not encourage VECIANA and subsequently checked with an Embassy officer who reported that VECIANA had made similar "wild-eyed" proposals to him. On 23 November 1961 the Miami News published a report of an unsuccessful attempt by Antonio VECIANA to kill Castro. VECIANA reportedly had arranged to assassinate Castro and Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos on 5 October in Havana, but the bazooka he was using failed to fire.

4. There has been no Agency relationship with VECIANA. A POA, which was granted for his use in para-military affairs in January 1962, expired in November 1962. VECIANA was born on 4 October 1935 in Havana. He was a member of the People's Revolutionary Movement, an anti-Castro group in Cuba during 1960-61, and was one of the founders of Alpha-66. A certified public accountant by trade, VECIANA was with A.I.D. in La Paz in 1968-72. VECIANA was registered in ISR to the U.S. Army in November 1962 and he was terminated without prejudice in July 1966. On 23 July 1962 VECIANA was interviewed, at his request, by Mr. Harry Real from the DCD New York office. VECIANA asked Real to arrange a meeting with a senior CIA officer to discuss Alpha-66's plans to assassinate Castro and to request CIA's assistance (U.S.\$100,000; 10,000 Cuban pesos; 48 hand grenades). There is no indication that this request was ever acted upon by CIA.

5. In April 1966 a LA Division officer, [redacted] using the alias John Livingston, met VECIANA in New York City. The meeting was arranged by a retired naval officer, [redacted] who had informed Chief, WJ Division that he had information of value concerning Cuba. When [redacted] arrived in New York City for the meeting, he was introduced by [redacted] to VECIANA. He immediately launched a discussion of the Cuban political situation and noted his strong feeling that the only solution was the assassination of Castro. [redacted] advised VECIANA that he was in no position to provide him with assistance or encourage him in an assassination attempt and was only interested in gathering information which he thought was the purpose of the meeting. VECIANA subsequently said that his roommate Felix ZABALA, a Cuban refugee, had excellent contacts in Havana. It was clear to [redacted] however, VECIANA was attempting to use ZABALA potentially to get Agency financial support for his organization.

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VECIANA suggested that \$50,000 would be needed to get his activities off the ground. [redacted] indicated to VECIANA that he would look into the ZABALA matter and would probably arrange for ZABALA to be contacted in Puerto Rico.

6. There is no indication in the file that any Agency officer in contact with VECIANA ever used an alias Morris Bishop. There is no Morris Bishop listed in true name in the DDO rolls. There was never any contractual relationship with VECIANA and he was not paid CIA funds.

7. On 11 January 1977 a sanitized copy of VECIANA's 201 file was made available to staffers from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

signed
Raymond A. Warren
Raymond A. Warren

Attachment

DDO/C/LA/COG/OPS [redacted] js (9229) (21 January 1977)

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