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7 JUN 1976

SUBJECT: SSC Subcommittee Draft Report on Intelligence Agencies' Support for the Warren Commission Inquiry

1. The main problem posed for the Agency by the draft report is its presentation of the AMLASH operation. It is a classic example of selective use of quotations and of quotation out of context. Essential features of the record are omitted, and in some instances negative interpretation is used in place of positive facts. The chronology is blurred in some instances, when it relates to the substantive evolution of the Agency's relations with AMLASH/1. The resulting picture varies significantly from the true nature of the operation, in terms of what happened when.

2. The SSC Subcommittee draft may well make a valid point, in contending that the Agency did not do a detailed review of possible Cuban involvement in President Kennedy's assassination, in contrast to the exhaustive analysis of possible Soviet involvement. The draft report makes the point that the Warren Commission did not ask it, and the Agency did not do it on its own initiative. The preliminary reaction of the DDO representatives who read the draft report, is that the draft is correct in noting the limited effort on the subject of Cuban involvement. While there are a variety of explanations for this, the fact remains that it is explanation instead of a record of performance. What such an inquiry would show -- or not show -- is not the question, but whether an inquiry was made. This point, while made in the draft report, becomes almost subliminal to the heavy emphasis given the significance of the AMLASH operation. The fascination with the operation, and its detailed erroneous treatment, does a disservice to the purpose of the paper. Its extensive, repetitive treatment has been made such a part of so much of the paper that only highly competent editorial revision can be expected to correct it in the time reportedly available.

3. The focus of the SSC Subcommittee draft report is not fixed on the scope of CIA operations against Cuba and Castro, and the failure of the Agency to review these activities in the context of the Warren Commission inquiry. It emphasizes one particular operation in support of its main conclusion. Most of those familiar with the operation will agree that it eventually developed into assassination plotting. Some Agency personnel -- directly involved at the time -- will not accept this characterization, drawing a line in their own minds as to how far they went. However, to most of those not so involved, the AMLASH operation did progress to the point that CIA agreed to provide equipment for an assassination attempt against Castro, this

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support constituting participation in whatever was to follow. The key point, in considering the SSC Subcommittee paper, is when AMLASH/1 could reasonably have believed that he had official U.S. support for such specific action, and when Castro could have learned of this in reference to the assassination of President Kennedy. The question presented in the draft report is whether the AMLASH operation reasonably could have led to the President's assassination, and whether CIA therefore should have reported it, as such, to the Warren Commission.

4. The draft report seeks to establish that (1) the AMLASH operation was an assassination plot on the part of CIA for a substantial period preceding President Kennedy's assassination, and (2) it was so insecure that Castro not only could have, but most likely did, become aware of it in time to serve as a motive for retaliatory action against President Kennedy. If, in fact, CIA's posture vis-a-vis AMLASH/1 provided no reasonable grounds for him to believe that he had U.S. support for the assassination of Castro during the period preceding Kennedy's assassination, this central thesis of the report suffers at its inception. As a matter of interest, at this time the report appears to accept the operations with the criminal Syndicate as successfully secure.

5. There is a relatively objective basis for testing the various interpretations to be offered at this time. In 1967 the Office of the Inspector General investigated CIA plots against Castro (among others) and prepared a report on the subject. That was done to record the essential aspects of the operations, and not in anticipation of an issue such as the present one. The reports were in considerable detail; in fact, they presented considerably more detail on the substantive development of the AMLASH relationship than is included in the draft report of the SSC Subcommittee. Written for most limited dissemination (one copy only, for the DCI) at a time apart from the present issue, it cannot easily be dismissed as special pleading today. Where its reported facts contradict assertions of the draft report they should be faced head on.

6. The attached package consists of a series of preliminary comments on the SSC Subcommittee draft report. Some are simple editorial critique (although the first couple of pages include relevant portions of the 1967 report by the CIA Inspector General), some raise questions of fact for internal CIA checking, and others present points for possible security consideration. Copies are being sent to the representatives of the Office of Security, CI Staff, LA Division and to Mr. Bolten. We should be prepared to discuss our approach Tuesday afternoon at 1400 in the Review Staff Conference Room.

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7. The classification of Top Secret derives from the present classification born by the SSC Subcommittee draft report.

S. D. Breckinridge
Deputy Inspector General

Attachment:
As stated

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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. 2d 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 an operation that was "backed" by the government.

Page 8. Characterization of the Castro plots "as another method of achieving a change of government" is imprecise; it suggests a degree of separation from other government activities that is not that clear. The so-called first phase of the operation involving the criminal Syndicate was coincident with the Bay of Pigs and more logically part of that overall government program, however compartmented in its own activity. The so-called second phase was more than coincidental, the case officer being the CIA representative in MONGOOSE activity. It may be an interesting editorial phrase, but imprecise.

The statement that the FBI knew about these plots by at least May 1962 needs some elaboration. These plots didn't involve AMLASH/1 at that time, so far as assassination was concerned. This also has to be reconciled with the statement at page 12 that gives the date of FBI learning of it as July 1964. The first was prior to AMLASH/1's involvement in plotting assassination with CIA, and the second is long after the Kennedy assassination. If reference is to FBI knowledge of the involvement of the criminal Syndicate, it has to refer to more than knowledge of the contacts, but also the substance of the operations. Something is amiss here.

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2nd and 3rd paragraphs. The status of operational activity in June 1973 was that there was no activity in the Syndicate operations for months (it had been agreed that they were discontinued), and there had been no contact with AMLASH/1 since August 1962. In the latter case AMLASH/1 was given no encouragement on his thoughts that Castro had to be killed, so far as U.S. support for it was concerned. Statements by Castro about retaliation for "terrorists" had to apply to other activities.

Paragraph bottom of page (continuing to page 9). References by Castro (12 September 1963) to "covert activity" undoubtedly referred to the not-so-covert activity of MONGOOSE operations. This mixing of general operational aggression--short of open war--and individual operations, makes the editorial treatment of the draft report difficult to read. It is pretty loosely done.

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, and tries to raise the inference of a connection between that version of what was said and other operational activity. There is no planning relationship between the inconclusive relationship with AMLASH/1 and what was then going on under MONGOOSE.

The meeting with Fitzgerald, preparing for it, and what followed, is key to how the relationship with AMLASH/1 was at that point.

Page 9.
(continued)

In advance of the meeting, as shown in the 1967 IG report, the written plan was that AMLASH/1 be given "assurance of full U.S. support if there is a change of the present government in Cuba."

The record of what happened at the meeting was recorded afterwards as follows: "Fitzgerald informed (AMLASH/1) that the United States is prepared to render all necessary assistance to 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 the 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 in control of Havana . . . " Emphasis supplied.

Recollections of the meeting amplified the written report, as recorded in the 1967 IG report. AMLASH/1 wanted a high-powered rifle with telescopic sights to kill Castro. Fitzgerald wanted no part of such a scheme and told AMLASH/1 that the U.S. simply does not do such things. Interesting confirmation of this is found at page 134 of the Subcommittee draft report, in a summary of an FBI report of July 1964, some eight months after Fitzgerald met with AMLASH/1 in Paris. The Subcommittee draft cites that report to prove something else, but it really is relevant here.

AMLASH/1 is quoted in July 1964 as saying that Robert F. Kennedy had refused U. S. involvement in the assassination of Castro. And where would AMLASH/1 have obtained that impression? At the 29 October 1963 meeting where Fitzgerald had represented himself as speaking for Robert F. Kennedy.

At a subsequent meeting between AMLASH/1 and the case officer, AMLASH/1 professed satisfaction with the policy discussions (he had been told, as noted above, that an anti-communist coup group, if successful would be supported) and was reported as follows: "but now desired to know what technical support we could give him." He didn't give up easily! But the author of the SSC Subcommittee draft sees this as the condition by him for further meetings--or so he said in discussions of the draft paper. AMLASH/1's views were relayed 14 November 1963 through a close friend in the U. S., expressing his dissatisfaction with U. S. unwillingness to provide "technical assistance."

As of this time it should be reasonably clear that AMLASH/1 had no basis for thinking that he had U. S. --or CIA--support for assassination of Castro. Whatever developed later, this is significant in how one treats the operation as a basis for what Castro could have learned if he knew what AMLASH/1 knew.

On 19 November 1963 Fitzgerald approved--in Washington--providing AMLASH/1 a cache in Cuba, with high-powered rifle and telescope. Also plans were made to prepare a Papermate pen with a hypodermic that could be used in administering poison to Castro. AMLASH/1 did not know of these developments until he was met by the case officer on 22 November 1963 in Paris, the date of President Kennedy's assassination. The development was too late to provide a basis for any retaliatory action by Castro against Kennedy, if he learned of it.

As a matter of added relevance, it is noted that the public trial of AMLASH/1 contained no reference to this phase of his activity. Nor did the book provided by Castro to Senator McGovern about plots against his life contain any reference to this period, so far as AMLASH/1 involvement was concerned, referring to the later period instead.

The full chronology of the AMLASH/1 operation makes it clear that the SSC Subcommittee draft is in error in attempting to make the AMLASH operation the basis for a claim that it could, of itself, have led to a retaliatory act by Castro because of its threat on his life. It simply does not fit.

Page 12. Allen Dulles "probably did not know about the AMLASH operation," as stated in the SSC Subcommittee draft report. However, even if he had, the chronology above would have led him to consider it irrelevant to the task of the Warren Commission.

Page 12. Line 8. Reference to FBI first learning of the AMLASH operation in July 1964 (see page 8 for statement it first learned in May 1962).

Page 13. 1st complete paragraph. This states that the AMLASH plot was "of far greater relevance to the Warren Commission work." That, of course, is the issue. Further, those willing to testify to the AMLASH plot would have had to be knowledgeable of it in detail, or what they said would have had to take into account the sequence of events as they relate to when it associated the Agency with AMLASH/1's plans, which were following the Kennedy assassination.

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."

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To check. What was requested, and how would the request have produced information on compartmented operations that those involved may not have considered related?

Page 15. "Although this report (1967 IG Report) raised the questions of a possible connection between the CIA's plots against Castro and the assassination of President Kennedy, the report was apparently not furnished to CIA investigators who had been ordered that year to review again the assassination investigation. Once again, although these CIA investigators requested information that should have led them to discover the AMLASH operation, they apparently did not receive the information."

First, what was requested, to whom? Second, the report will be read again to see what connection it saw between the various plots and the eventual assassination--there may have been some recognition of the concept, but at this writing I recall only noting possible connections between people in the various operations.

"Thus, the Select Committee has found that the CIA on several occasions failed to investigate the possibility of a connection between its own assassination plots, especially the AMLASH plot, and the assassination of President Kennedy."

The fact is that the possibility was not investigated, at least so far as I know. It probably would be less dramatic, but more responsible, to observe that there was no investigation of possible connections between all CIA activities against Cuba and the Kennedy assassination. In any event, the "especially" aspect of the AMLASH plot is treated above.

Page 21. Did President Kennedy "admit that the April Bay of Pigs invasion was in fact an operation sponsored by the CIA?" The public record seems to accept the blame personally.

Page 27.
(misnumbered 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 the CIA intended at this time to use AMLASH in an assassination operation."

In discussion with the author, he stated that the "POA had been cancelled," which raised the question in his mind. It was noted to him that AMLASH had not been out of Cuba for a long time. Please check this. The concluding portion of the sentence is an editorial gratuity.

Footnote on that page. Did Nestor Sanchez (not named in the text) testify ". . that AMLASH himself believed assassination was the first step of any coup in Cuba and CIA met with him on that basis"?

Footnote also has AMLASH/1 wanting a U.S. invasion of Cuba, or attempting an "inside" job (i.e., assassination), and that he was awaiting a U.S. plan of action. The footnote then says, "This was communicated to CIA Headquarters on September 7."

The author, in discussions, revealed that he sees the significance of this passage in terms of CIA dealing with AMLASH/1 on his requests, and therefore being compromised by accepting them as a basis for the next meeting.

Page 29. The draft report, commenting on the Harker interview with Castro, says "AMLASH not being a terrorist." We agree, and it might be suggested that the statements on page 8 be made consistent with this.

Page 29.
(continued)

The draft report also says - "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." This rational statement should be encouraged, and related to Castro's giving Senator McGovern the book that did not show AMLASH/1's earlier associations with the Agency.

Page 33. Was the AMLASH operation an SAS or WH operation?

Footnote *. What can we provide on the real character of the Cuban Coordinating Committee, described vaguely and mysteriously in the draft report?

Footnote **. This notes that the FBI learned of CIA's operation on 10 October 1963, and suggests that this learning of the operation led to its termination. Actually, the termination was much later. What are the facts on this, if we know?

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

Pages 36-38.

LaChuga-Atwood exchanges. This is made to appear as if Castro closing off negotiations in a way related to AMLASH. What have we on this?

Page 41. SASICI should read SAS/CI.

Page 42. Cites 23 November 1963 cable to Paris instructing case officer to "break contact AMLASH." It reads as though this action reflects recognition of relationship with AMLASH/1 to the Kennedy assassination. What was this, in fact?

Page 47. Tom Karamessines, when asked hypothetically if AMLASH/1 had been used a certain way, answered hypothetically. He is quoted as though he was speaking in fact. Challenge this presentation.

Page 53. Draft report states that an overseas station raised a question of AMLASH security. What is this?

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Page 65. Did the FBI learn the "details" of the AMLASH operation in July 1964? Perhaps the contact, but what details? The Draft report's summary most likely takes a few liberties with this.

Page 78. If Alvarado is "D", this tells who he is, if it is important.

Page 79. It isn't clear from the text whether it was the Mexican police or CIA that denied the FBI's repeated requests to interrogate "D".

Page 83. Did CIA "usually" check with the FBI before supplying information to the Warren Commission?

Page 89. Footnote*. "FBI documents also reveal that James Angleton of the CIA passed information he received about the Warren Commission investigation to the FBI. On 5/13/64 he contacted William Sullivan stating 'that it would be well for both McCone and Hoover to be aware that the Commission might ask the same questions, wondering whether they would get different replies from the heads of the two agencies.'" He is then described as giving some sample questions and answers: Was Oswald ever a a CIA agent? No -- Is there any evidence of a conspiracy? No.

What was Angleton's record during this period. Did he try to fix the responses, as inferred?

Page 104. The report notes that while CI Staff was responsible for liaison with the Warren Commission, it says "They were not, at this time, affiliated with CIA's Cuban affairs staff," although later SAS is described as having its own CIA Staff which coordinated with Angleton's shop. Perhaps we should ask that the statements be reconciled.

Footnote*. "The counterintelligence Staff of CIA at that time handled all matters relating to the activities of hostile intelligence agencies, except for the activities of Cuban intelligence."???

Page 105. The report notes the Soviet orientation of "CIA's staff," presumably the CI Staff, and makes the point that there was no corresponding analysis of pro-Castro or anti-Castro groups.

". . . the Chief of SAS, Counterintelligence, testified that the SAS had no 'direct' role in the investigation of the assassination."

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". . . there is no evidence whatsoever of SAS being asked or of its volunteering an analysis of Oswald's contacts with Cuba or with Cuban groups. The Chief SAS Counterintelligence testified that he could recall no such analysis."

Have we any comment on this? First, how large a CI group did SAS have? Was the one man all of it, or was he chief of something? Further, if we did no analysis, then the report makes a point we should face up to.

Page 106. Report makes point that SAS's capability to obtain intelligence from Cuba or the exiles. If we didn't take this on, we have to accept the point.

Page 108. Report makes point that there is no evidence that CIA made an "affirmative effort" to collect information on the assassination. "Indeed, AMLASH himself had access to high officials in Cuba. He was never interrogated about the assassination of President Kennedy."

In our eyes this is a bit far-fetched. AMLASH/1 was not an agent, but someone we were trying to get to move in a particular direction, with limited success. Nevertheless, it would be hard for us to handle this.

Page 109. Reference is made to interrogation of a KGB officer (defected) who had access to Oswald's KGB dossier. Any security problems?

Page 110. Warren Commission, says report, was told by FBI that CIA had information on Cuban exile groups, but that the CIA was never asked for it. "There would seem to have been some obligation for CIA to disclose the general nature of its operations which might affect the Commission's investigation."

This point seems to have validity, and we should review our records to see what we have on the point.

Report notes that of the Warren Commission requests to CIA there was only one Commission letter requesting Cuban information, and that was on Ruby's 1959 visit to Cuba.

Page 112. The report cites a mysterious 1 December 1963 Cuban flight to Havana, with a mysterious person who traveled in the cockpit, and therefore could not be identified. CIA is described as replying to request for information on it that it had no information indicating that there was a follow-up investigation.

What is the actual story? Do we know?

Page 113. Another "intriguing" case, of a man crossing the Mexican border on 23 November and then flying to Cuba is cited.

What do we know about this?

Page 120. Is CIA support for anti-Castro DRE, JURE, and 30th of November Movement groups classified?

Page 122. Does it reveal a method, in describing efforts to obtain copies of FPCC letter heads for a deception operation? And if so should we protest?

Page 126. ". . unlikely that anyone with the Warren Commission knew of CIA-sponsored assassination attempts. . ."

Dulles, of course, knew of the earlier Syndicate operation. Also, the Attorney General had knowledge. Do we have to labor with this one?

Page 129. People cited who had knowledge or views of AMLASH operation.

Halpern (though not named) is quoted as regarding it as an assassination plot. Many do, but the issue is when it developed to the point that it could have been so regarded. If the evidence doesn't treat this point, then the report's citing it generally is in error. In this case in 1967 Halpern supported Fitzgerald's view of the October 1963 meetings.

SAS/CI also seems to have spoken broadly on it. Do we know to what extent he was witting of the details of the operation, its timing and development?

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Page 133. In October 1963 the FBI could have had no factual knowledge of the "assassination aspect of the AMLASH" operation, as CIA had no such relation with AMLASH/1 at that time. The report should be corrected here (see supra).

Page 134. The report cites a July 1964 FBI (from the CIA contact with AMLASH/1?) quoting AMLASH/1 in his being disgruntled over Robert F. Kennedy having refused to support Castro's assassination. This is cited to show something else, but in fact it supports the 1967 IG report in what Fitzgerald told AMLASH/1 at the Paris meeting in October 1963.

Page 135. How could a "desk officer" who was unaware of the AMLASH operation at the time it was going on, and didn't learn of it until he was testifying (when what he knew of it was the characterization of the questioners then) have a relevant opinion to the Kennedy assassination? Yet he is quoted as an authority.

Now really!

The quoting of David Belin about assassination, when he was speaking generically (as it appears in the text of the report) and not about AMLASH, seems a bit strained, so far as relevance is concerned. The same applies to Griffin, whoever he is.

Page 137. That Halpern viewed AMLASH/1's being offered the hypodermic pen in Paris as "ironic," isn't relevant to the significance of the incident, which is that it was 22 November 1963, the date of President Kennedy's assassination, too late to have affected Castro's opinion on an operation against the President. This is a bit of editorial self-indulgence on the part of the writer.

Page 138. If AMLASH/1 were a "provocation," as suggested briefly, would the logic of it have led Castro to be so upset by the results of his own "provocation" that he would then send an assassin to the U.S.? And then fail his own provocateur for several years?

Now really!

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Page 139. SAS/CI is quoted as stating that he did not recall the time frame of the AMLASH operation. The quotation is to make another point, but this one discredits the relevance of what SAS/CI had to say, as the sequence of events is central to understanding what happened when.

Pages 141-142.
This section cites 1964 events (post Kennedy assassination) as relating to how to interpret what AMLASH/1 was about prior to Kennedy's death. This really gets the time sequence mixed up.

Who is "A"? It quotes him as having views that really are not supported by where CIA's relations with AMLASH/1 stood at the critical time. He has to be identified somewhat better than this to be given credibility.

between A's statements

Page 145. This section claims responsibility on CIA's part to see a possible connection in 1965 and the AMLASH security in 1963. It also says that the FBI made a connection between A's 1963 activities and his 1965 knowledge. Can we throw any light on this presentation?

Page 152. Attorney Morgan named. Does this matter to us?

Page 161. The report says that the 1967 IG report treated "the AMLASH operation from 1963 through 1965 as an assassination operation."

The 1967 IG report did characterize the operation as an assassination operation. But at the time of its writing no one claimed it to be nor not to be that sort of activity at any particular point in time. The detailed recitation shows the transition of the relationship from a general one, in which CIA was saying "no" to AMLASH/1's request for support in both his coup and the assassination of Castro, to the time that it was giving him limited equipment in the post-assassination period. It is

correct to say that the relationship assumed the character of association with AMLASH/1's plans for assassination in 1963, but that was not known to AMLASH/1 until the very day of the Kennedy assassination. This is hardly a bit of professional responsibility on the part of the author of the report.

General. Cables are quoted, date and time group given, and IN and OUT numbers as well as DIR numbers. The SSC report on alleged assassination handled this by giving the dates of the cables, stating the sender (Kinshasha, etc.) and quoting without paraphrasing. That seems a proper way to handle this.

General. Names of Agency employees already reported in the report or alleged assassination are repeated here. Names reported and not identified: Alvarado, Griffin. As noted, Morgan's name may have been printed by error, as he is otherwise identified as an attorney.

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