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Conclusions

Basically, the research effort for the present paper produced two general conclusions. First, the SSC Final Report contains numerous factual errors, both in the extensive treatment of a selected operation (AMLASH) and in a number of separate incidents that it presents. Second, while one can make the point in principle that the Warren Commission could well have broadened its review to include the anti-Cuban programs of the U.S. Government, in trying to make the case for that concept Book V of the SSC Final Report went to such lengths in its treatment as to detract from the point at hand. It is difficult to characterize it more generously.

In a very real sense, the SSC Final Report has compounded the problem of public perception. On a flawed presentation it has accused the intelligence agencies of derelictions and worse. While it has reinforced the public sense of unfinished business yet to be done, it has so badly beclouded the issue as to have done a disservice to

NW 53080 DocId:32272935 Page 2

future attempts at objective and dispassionate inquiry.

While one can understand today why the Warren Commission limited its inquiry to normal avenues of investigation, it would have served to reinforce the credibility of its effort had it taken a broader view of the matter. CIA, too, could have considered in specific terms what most saw then in general terms--the possibility of Soviet or Cuban involvement in the assassination because of tensions of the time. It is not enough to be able to point out erroneous criticisms made today. The Agency should have taken broader initiatives then, as well. That CIA employees at the time felt--as they obviously did--that the activities about which they knew had no relevance to the Warren Commission inquiry does not take the place of a record of conscious review. The present research effort has undertaken to conduct such a review; it is noted that the findings are essentially negative. However, it must be recognized that CIA cannot be as confident of a cold trail in 1977 as it could have been in 1964; this apparent fact will be noted by the critics of the Agency, and by those who have found a career in the questions already asked and yet to be asked about the assassination of President Kennedy.

NW 55160 DocId:32272935 Page 3

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CIA Operations Against Cuba

The SSC Final Report speaks of operations against Cuba and the Castro regime, and contends that they should have been reported in detail to the Warren Commission as part of the subject matter that it consciously took into consideration. A case can be made for specific considerations of these various activities by the Warren Commission, at least as part of the unique background of the times; it might have provided it additional investigative leads. However, to advance the general thought is not to discard the usual tests of evidence that must still control how the findings are treated.

It should be noted that at the time of the Warren Commission inquiry there was no secret about the tensions between the Kennedy Administration and the Castro regime. Book V of the SSC Final Report refers briefly to some of the more dramatic events, such as the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 and the Missile Crisis in October 1962 (see pages 2, 3, 10 and 11). In fact, the totality of American policy and practice must have appeared threatening to the Castro regime, and most certainly must have been considered by it as provocative.

Additional U. S. policies and programs that could have been viewed negatively by Castro were the breaking of diplomatic relations,

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E. 1
TAB D
TAB E

economic and political sanctions, paramilitary operations (which received recurring publicity in the press), as well as a variety of covert operations that were not known publicly. On 18 November 1963 President Kennedy -- four days before his death -- delivered a major policy address in Miami, accusing Castro of having betrayed the Cuban revolution; at the time the press, reportedly on the basis of what "White House sources" said about it, viewed it as a call for the Cuban people to overthrow the Castro regime.

The United States provided a haven and base for Cuban exiles, who conducted their independent operations against the Castro government. Some of these exiles had the support of CIA, as well as from other elements of the U.S. Government, and still others had support from private sources. With or without official U.S. support these exiles spoke in forceful Latin terms about what they hoped to do. The Cuban intelligence services had agents in the exile community in America and it is likely that what they reported back to Havana assigned to CIA responsibility for many of the activities under consideration, whether CIA was involved or not.

We do not know the extent to which the Warren Commission took what might be characterized as "judicial notice" of the tensions between the two governments and their leaders; it certainly was in the public domain. That consideration was given the possibility of

NW 53080 DocId:32272935 Page 5

E. 1 E. 2 E. 3 E. 4 TAB D TAB E TAB F TAB G

Cuban or Soviet involvement in the assassination is no secret, clearly reflecting a recognition of the question at the time. That a request was not made by the Warren Commission, nor volunteered by the intelligence agencies, for extensive review of all Cuban operations is being faulted today. Yet, in the light of understandings at that time, it could well have appeared to members of the Warren Commission and its staff as not directly relevant, in fact, to the specific issue of the murder of the President. In the absence of evidence to the contrary a case could still be made for that view, although the evolution of public perceptions probably would not accept it without reservation.

The SSC Final Report has fixed on the Cuban operations of the intelligence agencies--primarily those of CIA--for special attention in considering the question. Implicitly it accepts the theory that there could well have been conspiracy in the murder of President Kennedy, and that Castro could have been behind it, having been provoked by depredations against Cuba or plotting against his own life. However, in advancing its thesis, the SSC Report cautioned that it had "seen no evidence that Fidel Castro or others in the Cuban government plotted President Kennedy's assassination in retaliation for U.S. operations against Cuba."

E. 1
E. 2
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BACKGROUND

In April, 1976, the Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities (SSC) published their Final Report (Book V) which in essence faulted the CIA for its errors of ommission in not informing the Warren Commission of the Agency's on-going plots against the revolutionary government in Cuba and its attempts on the life of the premier, Fidel Castro. The Committee's rationale is detailed on pages 6-7 of its Findings, but one paragraph succinctly sums up their position.

"Senior CIA officials also should have realized that their agency was not utilizing its full capability to investigate Oswald's pro-Castro and anti-Castro connections. They should have realized that CIA operations against Cuba, particularly operations involving the assassination of Castro, needed to be considered in the investigation. Yet, they directed their subordinates to conduct an investigation without telling them of these vital facts. Those officials, whom the Warren Commission relied upon for expertise, advised the Warren Commission that the CIA had no evidence of a foreign conspiracy." (p. 7, Book V)

Stung by the Senate criticism and the "rippling effect" that Book V occasioned in the media, the CIA prepared a comprehensive report in 1977 designed to answer, at least within the Agency, the critical questions posited in the SSC Final Report. However, even the CIA's 1977 Report tacitly recognizes the inadequacy of the CIA's narrow response to the Warren Commission's quest for all possible relevant information. ("Relevancy" is, of course, the "buyword" upon which both the Senate and Agency each base their position on the importance of the anti-Castro plots to the Commission's work.) On page 10 of the Agency's conclusions, the 1977 Report acknowledges that:

> "While one can understand today why the Warren Commission limited its inquiry to normal avenues of investigation, it would have served to re-inforce the credibility of its effort had it taken a broader view of the matter. CIA, too, could have considered in specific terms what most saw in general terms -- the possibility of Soviet or Cuban involvement in the assassination (JFK) because of tensions of the time. ....The Agency should have taken broader initiatives, then, as well." (p. 10, 1977 Report)

It is not the purpose of this analysis to detail the conflicting viewpoints of the SSC and CIA with regard to the significance to the work of the Warren Commission of the CIA's Castro assassination "attempts" and to resolve the parties controversy as to the operations' importance. Instead, this paper seeks to present a comprehensive review of all the facts, drawn from a variety of sources, of organized crime's involvement or potential involvement in the CIA operations against Cuba during 1960-1963. Certain influences and conclusions will then be drawn upon the nature, scope, and motivation of the syndicate participants in the operations.

INVOLVEMENT OF ORGANIZED CRIME IN CIA PLOTS TO ASSASSINATE FIDEL CASTRO

The genesis of the utilization of the United States criminal syndicate by the CIA to attempt to assassinate Castro is placed by the 1967 Inspector General's Report as occurring during a conversation between the Deputy Director of Plans, Richard Bissell, and the Director of the Office of Security, Colonel Sheffield Edwards.** (1967 IG Report, p. ; Interim Report, p. 74) Edwards assigned the specific tasks of locating the right party to "eliminate or assassinate" Castro to James "Big Jim" O'Connell, who was the Chief of the Operational Support Division of the Office of Security. Both men agreed that Robert A. Maheu,** who had been previously utilized by the Agency in several sensitive covert operations, would be contacted to recruit the necessary personnel.

Although Maheu and O'Connell differ as to who initially brought up John Roselli's name for consideration, there was a meeting between Maheu and Roselli at the Brown Derby Restaurant in Los Angeles in early September 1960. (Interim Report, p. 75)

Comment: Maheu seems the logical person to have thought of and contacted Roselli for several reasons. In the

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** Maheu's CIA history and relationship to O'Connell are detailed on pp. 74-75, Interim Report.

Office of Security file on Ed Morgan, Maheu's attorney, there is a memo to the DCI dated 19 November 1970 which reviews the Mafia operation. Paragraph 5 states that: "Mr. Maheu advised that he had met one John Roselli on several occasions while visiting Las Vegas. He only knew him casually through other clients, but was given to understand that he was a high ranking member of the syndicate and controlled all the ice making machines on the Strip." Maheu reasoned that, if Roselli was, in fact, a member of the clan, he undoubtedly had connections leading into the Cuban gambling interests.")

(Comment: Confirmation of the earliest Maheu-Roselli contact is found in Roselli's FBI file and consists of an alleged telephone call in 1959 from Maheu to Roselli.) (See Roselli Write-up)

(Comment: Maheu and Roselli had mutual contacts in Las Vegas prior to 1960, including Hank Greenspun, editor of the Las Vegas Sun.)

Roselli, although apparently skeptical at first, agreed to a meeting in New York City with Maheu and O'Connell to discuss further details. (Interim Report, p. 76; Office of Security memo from Morgan file, dated 19 November 1970) Although the Inspector General's Report placed the meeting at the Plaza Hilton on 14 September 1960, Roselli recalled that the discussion took place during Castro's visit to the United Nations which began on September 18, 1960.

(Comment: Tony de Varona admits going to New York City at the time of Castro's visit, but it is unlikely that he was in contact with Roselli at this time or (testimony of de Varona) that his visit had an assassination motivation. According to a 19 November 1970 memo to the DCI, it was at this September meeting in New York City, that Roselli "agreed to introduce him (Maheu) to a friend, 'Sam Gold', who knew the Cuban crowd.")

(Comment: The timing of the introduction of both Giancana ('Gold') and Trafficante ('Joe') is important to the analysis of the "true" role of the mob in the Castro assassination plots. According to the 1967 IG Report, the entrance of Giancana took place "during the week of 25 September 1960"... (1967 IG Report, p. 18))

In contrast, the SSC Interim Report at p. 76, does not fix a date certain for Giancana's initial appearance but (although it was "certainly prior to October 18." (p. 76)) because of conflicting evidence between the 1967 IG September date and Maheu's Senate testimony which set the initiation in November 1960. As a compromise, the Interim Report reasoned that Giancana had been introduced to Maheu "prior to October

18" because (1) the Las Vegas wiretap occurred on October 30, 1960; and (2) DDP Bissell had received an FBI memo, dated 18 October 1960, which revealed an FBI ELSUR quoting Giancana as discussing his involvement in an assassination plot against Castro". (FBI memo dated 18 October 1960 from Hoover to Bissell, Interim Report, p. 79)

(Comment: Each of the dual reasons listed in the Interim Report on p. 77 are subject to critical analysis which will be dealt with separately below.)

(Comment: Although the 1967 IG Report stated that "Maheu pointed out 'Gold' to O'Connell from a distance but O'Connell never met either 'Gold' or 'Joe'", the Interim Report disputes this observation by apparently quoting from O'Connell's Senate testimony and stating that "the Support Chief, who was using the name 'Jim Olds'," said he had met 'Sam' and 'Joe', once, and then only briefly. (O.C. 5(30)75, pp. 26-29; Interim Report, p. 77))

(Comment: Conflicts appear also on several relatively minor points surrounding the September 1960 meetings in New York City and Miami. For instance:

1. Did Roselli know from the beginning that the operation was CIA?

a. O'Connell stated that Maheu told Roselli that they were representing international business interests whereas Roselli testified that Maheu told him that O'Connell was CIA (Interim Report, p. 76). Also, footnote 1 on page 76 indicates that Roselli told O'Connell "about three weeks after the New York meeting", which is during the Miami involvement of Giancana, that "I am not kidding. I know who you work for."

The importance of Roselli's recognition of CIA initiation is that it is doubtful if Giancana and Trafficante could have been enlisted unless they could be sure of government protection. This theme will be developed more fully below.

2. Roselli told his Cuban contacts that he was an "agent of some business interests of Wall Street that had... nickel interests and properties around Cuba..." (Roselli; 6/24/75, pp. 9, 17)

Cf. Jack Anderson column of January 19, 1971, which stated that "Could the plot against Castro have backfired against President Kennedy?....None of the assassination teams, however, had direct knowledge of the CIA involvement. The CIA instigators had represented themselves as oilmen seeking revenge agsinst Castro for his seizure of oil holdings."

In Anderson's sources for this article were Roselli and William Harvey, who was not privy to the details of Phase I, it is another example of serious discrepancies which exist between the CIA, Senate, and Anderson versions which all purport to depend, in varying degrees, upon Roselli.

3. The alleged "surprise discovery" by Maheu and O'Connell as to the true identities of "Sam Gold" and "Joe" is really suspect. First, although it is possible that the Senate Committee staff overlooked the specific Miami newspaper Sunday supplement (Parade) which purportedly included pictures of Giancana and Trafficante, thus graphically showing Maheu and O'Connell the nature of the people with whom they were dealing, it is a relatively easy matter to research Parade magazine for the months of October and November. It would appear that O'Connell and Maheu were looking for an ex post facto reason for continuing the operation after the introduction of two of the top Mafiosi in the United States. O'Connell testified that his discovery was after "we were up to our ears in it" which is difficult to fathom since the operation was in the embryonic stage and no pills were delivered to Roselli, et. al, until approximately March 1961. Whatever, the reason, the Senate staff insists it could not find the Parade article. (Interim Report, p. 77, fn. 1)

The principals in Phase I of the operation also disagree as to the roles which were to be played by both "Gold" and "Joe" in the pre-Bay of Pigs phase of the operation.

"Although Maheu described Giancana as playing a 'key' role, (Maheu, 7.2.975, p. 34) and discussed his job as "to locate someone in Castro's entourage who could accomplish the assassination", Roselli downplayed Giancana's part to that of a "back-up" man. (Roselli, 6/24/75, p. 15) (Whether Roselli received a "message" from Giancana's murder four days before Roselli's Senate appearance is open to question.) Roselli's Senate characterization of Giancana's role as minor is in contrast to his alleged recountment of Giancana's due to his "knowledge of the Cuban crowd" which the 19 November 1970 memo recorded.

Trafficante(s) involvement in Phase I is even more jumbled by the available evidence. The 1967 IG Report and Senate Interim Report state that "'Gold' identified 'Joe' to Maheu as a man who would serve as a courier to Cuba and make arrangments there". (IG Report, p. 19; Interim Report, p. 77) To support the description of Trafficante as a courier, the Interim Report quotes p. 19 of the 1967 IG Report in stating that, "At that time, the gambling casinos were still operating in Cuba and Trafficante was making regular trips between Miami and Havana on syndicate business".

(Comment: This factually unsupported assertion runs contrary to the evidence available through official government records of other agencies. As an example, State Department files reflect that Trafficante applied for a passport in Cuba on October ? , 1959, and received that document in Havana on February ? , 1960. (See Trafficante file, State Department) No records available to the Committee from INS, State Department, or FBI record any later 1960 travels even though the Bureau maintained decent surveillance on Trafficante during this period. In his Committee testimony, Trafficante recalled that he made two trips to Cuba after his release from prison in August 1959 and placed these sojourns within two or three months after his release from prison. (Testimony, pp. 4-53, Oct. , 1977) His testimony has some logical credibility in that all of the casinos in Havana were either closed or operating in the red by mid-1960, and law enforcement reports placed him in the Tampa-Miami area consistently during the pre-Bay of Pigs period.)

By the time of the Senate testimony of Roselli, however, Trafficante's role had diminished to a point even below Giancana's. He had been reduced from "courier" to a mere "translator" and was needed only to facilitate conversation between Roselli and the Cubans who had been recruited for the actual assassination. Interestingly, Trafficante and Roselli's 1975 and 1977 Congressional appearances dovetail well but remain in contradiction to the facts as they were being reported in 1963 by the principals.

(Comment: The Senate testimony of Trafficante and Roselli needs to be outlined with a view to contrasting the "courier vs. interpreter" role. My memory is that the Senate did not vigorously cross-examine either man on this discrepancy nor did the Interim Report "hint" at the problem.)

Once the actors had been assembled for the launching of the enterprise, a discussion began as to the method to be employed to accomplish the foal. The Agency took the simplistic, straight-forward approach of shooting Castro, but this plan was rejected by Giancana. In a comment to its 1967 Report, the Inspector General noted that "Giancana was flatly opposed to the use of firearms. He said that no one could be recruited to do the job because the chance of survival and escape would be negligible. Giancana stated a preference for a lethal pill that would be put into Castro's food and drink...Trafficante (Joe, the courier) was in touch with a disaffected Cuban official with access to Castro and presumably of a sort that would enable him to surrepticiously poison Castro. The gangsters named their man inside as Juan Orta, who was then office Chief and Director General of the Office of the Prime Minister, Castro. The gangsters said that Orta had once been in a position to received kickbacks from the gambling interests but had since lost that source of income and needed the money. (I.G. Report, p. 25)

(Comment: The observations quoted above of the 1967 I.G. Report are extremely significant in several respects. First, the poison pill modus operandi originated with Giancana, not the Agency, a point which is crucial to the final conclusions presented below. Secondly, Trafficante is identified as having access to and providing for the putative assassin in Cuba which is inconsistent which his self-serving role description of "interpreter". His ability to recruit Orta apparently was directly tied to his former gambling empire associations which formed a constant pattern for all his alleged conduct both during and after his Cuban days.) (See Trafficante profile.)

(Comment: Speculation concerning Orta's role arose during the Agency's 1977 Report when it was forced to address a problem raised by an April 23, 1975 article, concerning Frank Sturgis, written by Paul Meskill of the New York Daily News. Sturgis was quoted as saying, "the third (assassination) scheme involved planting a bomb in Castro's office. I had access to the Prime Minister's office," Sturgis said, "I knew Fidel's' private secretary, Juan Orta. I recruited him to work with the Embassy." (American Embassy in Havana).

What was disturbing to the writers of the 1977 Report was the fact that Orta's name had surfaced in connection with a Castro assassination plot, before revelation of the CIA-Mafia connection by the Senate Intelligence Committee. The Report references news stories linking Sturgis with Trafficante and with a "gambling partner" of Trafficante's, Norman Rothman. (See Rothman profile) Coupled with Sturgis' alleged mob relationships is the allegation that Sturgis had a role in inspecting the gambling casinos in Cuba on behalf of the Castro government and could have developed an interest with Orta in receiving gambling kickbacks."

A second aspect of Meskill's news series concerned a claim of Marita Lorenz that she had acted on behalf of Sturgis in 1960 in attempting to poison Castro, which dovetailed with the 18 October 1960 FBI memorandum on Giancana's electronically surveilled conversation in which he stated that "the assassin had arranged with a girl, not further described, to drop a 'pill' in some drink or food of Castro's". (Memo, Hoover to DCI A.H., DD 10/18/60)

The tentative conclusions advanced in the 1977 Report are as follows:

(p.21) It is obvious that many lines of speculation can be developed, not the least of which is that the Agency did not know the full extent of syndicate activities.... "

Additional considerations:

1. Criminal syndicate may well have had some independent activities of its own prior to CIA involvement in late 1960. Also, could have been on-going, when CIA reactivated plan in 1962, April.

2. Syndicate operators could have had activities such as these in New York Daily News stories in 1975 and 1976.

3. Frank Sturgis seems to have had contacts with, but not a member of the syndicate. Could well have been used by the syndicate.

4. Sturgis has not been a reliable source. He probably knew Orta in Cuba but he was outside Cuba when Orta assumed role of assassin.

If there was an earlier operation with Orta, it was not CIA; could have been earlier operation of syndicate.

Sturgis could have known or been involved in syndicate operation, or picked up gossip from Miami in 1965 after Orta returned there.

Neither the 1967 I.G. Report or the SSC Interim Report can pinpoint the precise date on which the Agency processed the poison pills which O'Connell delivered to Roselli. (Interim Report, p. 80) The chain of custody, according to the 1967 I.G. Report was for the lethal pills to be delivered from Roselli to Trafficante. Although the next intervening steps remain a mystery, Roselli reported to O'Connell that the pills had been delivered to Orta in Cuba in late February-early March 1961. (Interim Report, p. 27; Interim Report, p. 80)

(Comment: The Senate Interim Report reported the version of Joe Shimon whose memory was that the money and pills for the operation were delivered at a meeting at the Fountainbleau Hotel on March 12, 1961 attended by "Maheu, Roselli, Trafficante and the Cuban." (Interim Report, p.81) Shimon's story is filled with vivid details, which are documented on p. 82 of the Report, but his credibility is subject to serious question as his account is not shared by anyone else connected with the plan nor is his relationship with Roselli, Giancana, or Trafficante appear as "cozy" as he would lead one to believe.

It is also apparent that Shimon was a source for Jack Anderson's column of January 19, 1971, which fixed the date of the passage of the poison at the Fountainbleau by Roselli as March 13, 1961, and contained the report that Castro became ill a few weeks later.

The real problem with Shimon's story is that the pills were returned to the CIA for a few weeks because Orta could or would not attempt the poisoning; a fact apparently unknown to Shimon before his "leak" to Anderson and his Senate testimony.) Also, Castro was hospitalized for the month in early 1963, (not 1961)

(Comment: One additional fact concerning Orta's inability to carry out the mission ties in with the final thesis of this report. Orta "lost his position in Castro's office on 26 January 1961, while planning for the operation was still going on in Miami and Washington"...It would seem though that the gangsters did know that Orta had already lost his access to Castro. (1967 I.G. Report, p. 27)

With the failure of Orta to produce the desired results, the project was at a standstill until, once again, Santo Trafficante assumed command. Roselli told O'Connell that "Trafficante believed a certain leading figure in the Cuban exile movement might be able to accomplish the assassination. (1967 I.G. Report, p. 29; Interim Report, p. 80)

(Comment: The exile leader was, of course, Tony de Varona, who was the subject of speculation in an FBI memorandum of 18 January 1961 associating him with receiving financial aid from American gangsters for anti-Castro activities which pre-dated the CIA operation.

At the time of his introduction into the CIA-mob plots, de Varona was already being funded by the Agency through the Revolutionary Front and was heavily involved in CIA planning for the Bay of Pigs invasion which was imminent.

Interest in de Varona was also being expressed in 1960-61 by Mike McLaney whose advertising agency was engaged in promoting Varona's image in collaboration with McLaney's friend "Chirri" or "Chilli" Mendoza (Mendoza is described in Trafficante's FBI files as a close Cuban associate.))

Completing the picture of support for Varona is the promotional efforts of Dino and Eddie Cellini, McLaney and Lansky business associates, who were reportedly working through a Washington, D. C. public relations firm, Edward K. Moss and Associates. Moss had previous CIA associations and was supposedly acting as a conduit for funds supplied by the Cellini benefactors with the understanding that this group would have "privileged treatment 'in the Cuba of the future.' Attempts to verify these reports were unsuccessful." (1967 I.G. Report, p. 30)

The Lansky influence using the Cellini brothers as a "front" is particularly interesting in light of Varona's admission that Jorge Pujol arranged a mutiny in Miami in approximately 1960 wherein Meyer Lansky offered to financially "back" Varona's efforts to "educate the American people about Castro, which may be a euphenism for anti-Castro plots. (See Varona transcript.)

The logical inference to be drawn is that both the Agency organized crime, and other persons interested in removing the Castro regime, had settled upon de Varona, probably independently, as an individual who had the potential of uniting the multitude of exile groups who were in a continual internecine turmoil. De Varona was understandably pleased to permit both the U.S. Government and criminal syndicate to offer him support and asked no questions as to the source of the funds or the motives of his benefactors. (See Varona testimony).

Although de Varona has no specific memory of meeting Trafficante, the Tampa crime boss admits that he acted as an "interpreter" in several meetings attended by de Varona, Roselli, Giancana and other exiles. These meetings were arranged by Rafael "Macho" Gener, a Trafficante gambling partner from Havana who continued to serve Trafficante in Miami during the 1960's. Trafficante claimed that Roselli had previously recruited Gener, but this appears unlikely in view of Trafficante's long-standing friendship with Gener in Cuba, and Roselli's admission to O'Connell that Trafficante would provide the replacement for the ill-fated Juan Orta, who had escaped to the Venezuelan Embassy in April 1961.

(Comment: Paralleling the situation at the Senate hearings during 1975 when Roselli's description of Trafficante's role changed from his "courier" characterization in 1960-61 as reported by the Agency to Trafficante's "interpreter" statement, is the recent interview with Gener who agrees with Trafficante's Committee testimony that he was an intermediary with de Varona only for Roselli. The net result in both instances is to minimize Trafficante's exposure. (Cf. Fonzi interview with Gener, May , 1978 and Trafficante testimony, October 7, 1977.))

If ambiguity exists as to the specifics of the introduction of de Varona into Phase One of the Castro assassination plots, more confusion surrounds de Varona's actual participation prior to the Bay of Pigs invasion. The I.G. Report indicates that de Varona attempted a second poison[illegible] before the Cuban invasion but Roselli was positive that only one attempt (Orta's) was made. He was also positive that he delivered

both pills, money and supplies to de Varona which is corroborated by O'Connell during 1961. The conflict is resolved by the Senate in speculating "that only one pre-Bay of Pigs attempt was made, and that...(de Varona) was the contact in the United States who arranged for...(Orta)...to administer the poison.

(Comment: There appears to be no factual way to resolve de Varona's initial contribution to the poison attempts, especially since Varona denies ever having received poison pills from Rossselli or being involved in any attempt on Castro's life at any time. (See Varona transcript).)

(Comment: The Agency was aware of the possible dangers inherent in having de Varona participate in the mob's plots while continuing his post on the Revolutionary Council. However, "steps were taken to end his participation in the syndicate plan but (they) were apparently ineffective." (1967 I.G. Report, p. 32))

PHASE TWO

The debacle which marked the mid-April 1961 Bay of Pigs effort curtailed CIA efforts with the mob to assassinate Castro, and it was not until April 1962, when Bill Harvey assumed Agency responsibility for the task, were efforts made to re-establish contact with Rosselli.

However, the fact that the Agency was squeamish during the Bay of Pigs aftermath to continue to try to kill Castro does not mean that the mob shared their shyness. Indeed, both Harvey and O'Connell swore that Harvey "took over a going operation." (I.G. Report, p. 33) The exact details of what that operation might have been has not been uncovered, but Rosselli's ability to regenerate his forces in response to Harvey's contact in April 1962 was immediate. Once again the ubiquitous de Varona was to provide the individuals who would carry the lethal poison into Cuba.

However, there were some significant differences between Phase One and Phase Two of the operation which bear upon the ultimate question of the mob's motivation and seriousness in carrying out their part of the bargain struck in 1960 with the Agency.

First: In Phase One, Rosselli, et. al., demonstrated their ability to execute the contract on Castro by naming their source, who was, in fact, in a position close to Castro to succeed. In contrast, the details of the modus operandi and the ability of the putative assassins was deliberately vague. After Harvey initially met Rosselli in Miami in April 1962, Harvey reported that "the manner in which the lethal material was to be introduced into Castro's food (which involved) an asset of Varona's who had access to someone in a restaurant frequented by Castro." (1967 I.G. Report, p. 47) By June, 1962, after Varona had received money and munitions from the JMWAVE station and had presumably sent the pills into Cuba, "Rosselli reported to Harvey on 21 June that Varona had dispatched a team of three men to Cuba. Just what they were supposed to do is pretty vague. Harvey said that they appeared to have no specific plan for killing Castro. They were to recruit others who might be used in such a scheme. If an opportunity to kill Castro presented itself, they or the persons they recruited were to make the attempt -- perhaps using the pills. Harvey never learned their names or anything about them." (1967 I.G. Report, p. 51)

(Comment: As the 1967 I.G. authors correctly observed, Harvey's tale of the "favorite restaurant" poisoning opportunity was familiar in that Edwards had described precisely the same plan." The fact that Varona related the exact modus operandi to Harvey as he had discussed with Edwards in Phase One (circa 1960-mid 1961) leads to the possibilities that:

1. Harvey was correct in assuming that he was taking over an on-going operation in April 1962; or

2. The mob had been using de Varona before, during and after the Bay of Pigs and permitted the CIA to provide logistical support and future protection against the Justice Department; or

3. De Varona was simply making up a story for the Agency to gain their financial backing or in response to directions from organized crime.)

Second: The cast of underworld characters changed. Harvey had insisted that Maheu and Giancana be dropped from the operation which Rosselli readily acceded to. Trafficante's "interpreter" role was assumed by "Maceo", a mysterious "Cuban who spoke Italian" and who sometimes used the names Garcia-Gomez and Godoy.

(Comment: "Maceo's" introduction into one of the most sensitive CIA covert actions in history, without any attempt made by the Agency to check his background or to ascertain his identity is extraordinary. Yet, the Agency apparently went blithely "to bed" with the top hoodlums in the United States without doing any basic background security investigation.

Although the 1967 I.G. Report characterizes "Maceo" as "Rosselli's man", it is probable that this individual was drafted by Trafficante who had provided all the Cuban personnel previously used in the attempts and who still possessed, in 1962, the most complete network of Cuban allies in Miami and Cuba.

The termination of the CIA-Mafia plots was slow and undramatic. Rosselli, in May 1962, reported to Harvey that the pills and guns which had been delivered to Varona in Miami in April had arrived in Cuba, and an unidentified three-man team had been dispatched in June to execute the plan. (Interim Report, p. 84)

During September 1962, Rosselli related to Harvey that de Varona was readying a second three-man team who were "supposedly militia men whose assignment was to penetrate Castro's body guard. During this period, the 'medicine' was reported as still in place and the three men of the first team safe."(1967 I.G. Report, p. 51) However, the second team never made Cuba and a series of alibis were constructed during December and January, 1963. Nevertheless, de Varona supposedly collected $2,700 for the maintenance of these individuals from Rosselli who had received the payment from Harvey. (1967 I.G. Report, p. 52)

In mid-January, 1963 both Harvey and Rosselli agreed that "nothing was happening and that there was not much chance that anything would happen in the future." (1967 I.G. Report, p. 52) Rosselli was instructed to ease his way out of touch with Varona which he presumably did. The last meeting between Harvey and Rosselli occurred in Washington, D. C. in June 1963, when he was Harvey's overnight guest. However, their meeting ostensibly was not directly related to any assassination plots.

Comment: Harvey and Rosselli continued their friendship in 1970-71

CONCLUSION

The available evidence suggests the thesis which, in part, is tacitly assumed by the Agency in its 1977 internal Inspector General's Report wherein it states that, "It is possible that CIA simply found itself involved in providing additional resources for independent operations that the syndicate already had under way...In a sense, CIA might have been piggy-backing on the syndicate, and, in addition to its material contributions, was also supplying an aura of official sanction." (1977 I.G. Report, p. 20)

The relevant evidence is as follows:

1. FBI memo 18 October 1960 re: Giancana ELSUR:

> ...Giancana reportedly assured those present that Castro's assassination would occur in November. Moreover, he allegedly indicated that he had already met with the assassin-to-be on three occasions...Giancana claimed that everything has been perfected for the killing of Castro, and that the assassin had arranged with a girl, not further described, to drop a 'pill' in some drink or food of Castro. (1977 I.G. Report, p. 19)

Comment: Although the dates of initial meetings between Maheu, Rosselli, and Giancana are subject to diffenent interpretation, it is clear that no plans were finalized between the parties until sometime after October 18, 1960, the date of the FBI's intercepted conversation of Giancana.

The poison pills, prepared by the CIA at Giancana's request, were not ready for delivery until late February-early March 1961, so that it is difficult to see how Giancana's November 1960 assassination plot could be a part of the CIA operation. Rather, it appears that the mob had its poison plan in progress, using a mistress of Castro, to accomplish the deed, when the CIA fortuitously happened along to offer its support. The mob was then in a perfect position. If their private plot actually worked, and Castro died, then the syndicate had enormous blackmail potential against the CIA which it could exercise at the opportune moment. However, if their intrigue back-fired, then their position would be that they were only attempting to execute the wishes of their government.

Additional Comment: The actions of Giancana's "hired hand", Richard Cain, raise some interesting possibilities. Given Cain's admission to the FBI that he had joined the Chicago Police Department and Sheriff's office while on Giancana's payroll, Cain's approach to the CIA Chicago Office in the fall of 1960 to volunteer information on the Cuban community appears a little more than coincidental. Then when FBI files disclose that he is planning to go to Cuba for Life Magazine (one story), and to "bug" influential Cubans in Havana ostensibly for ex-President Prio (second story), the coincidence becomes more suspect. The suspicion is that Cain was being sent by Giancana to supervise the poisoning attempt on Fidel Castro. Cain could be the "assassin-to-be" whom Giancana referred to in the FBI memo of October 18, 1960 or he could be the contact man for the operation.

(Tie in memo on Cain with Salerno's view which is strongly supported by the evidence, that Cain was the "missing

second man" in the Las Vegas wiretap of October 30, 1960. Maheu needs to be questioned on this point.)

Cain continued to "volunteer" information and assistance to the CIA during 1961-1963. In August, 1963, he offered information on the DRE Student Directory in Chicago to that office of the Agency. Interestingly, Cubela was the former head of the Director's in Cuba when he was a major power in deposing Batista.

In September, 1963, Cain reported to the Chicago office of the CIA that DRE was in a deal to purchase a large arms shipment. He was told by the Agency to "get out of the picture", a directive which is subject to several interpretations, including the fact that the CIA was a willing participant in the deal.

Again, on November 27, 1963, Cain, now the Chief Investigator for Cook County Sheriff's office, gave the Agency some information that Oswald was in Chicago in April 1963 with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and had purchased the assassination rifle in March 1963.

2. Recruitment of the Potential Assassin(s)

In describing the putative poisoner, Giancana spoke in October 1960 of a "girl" who was close to Castro while the individual recruited for the CIA pills was Juan Orta, a secretary in Castro's Prime Ministry.

The identity of the "girl" referred to by Giancana can never be ascertained but Trafficante was clearly in the best position to recruit one of Castro's Cuban mistresses due to his multitude of contacts in the Cuban gambling and prostitution circles.

It was common for American gamblers to have Cuban mistresses and Trafficante, Rothman and Tourine were typical examples. Also, one witness told the Committee that Castro was accustomed to arriving at the Nacional Hotel (owned by Mike McLaney) unescorter on a regular basis to visit one of his paramours. Thus, it would have been relatively easy for Trafficante to have arranged for a young woman to service Castro and to attempt to poison him.

(Marita Lorenz is a confusing witness, to say the least, and her potential as a assassin recruited by Frank Sturgis has been previously discussed. However, she was also Charles Tourine's mistress and, thus, could have been solicited to activate the poison plot. Unfortunately, Tourine is totally uncooperative and Lorenz was not asked about her relationship

with Tourine in Cuba so that we do not know the dates match.

Comment: Juan Orta, the man identified to the Agency as the gangsters' contact in Castro's inner circle, was presumably enlisted by Trafficante, due to Orta's former receipt of gambling "kickbacks".

One fact is extremely bothersome, however, in attampting to gauge the depth of the mob's sincerity in using Orta to execute the assassination plan. According to the 1967 I.G. Report (p. 28), Orta "lost his position in the Prime Minister's Office on 26 January 1961, while planning for the operation was still going on in Miami and in Washington." According to the official version Orta receipted for the pills in late February-early March 1961 and "kept the pills for a couple of weeks before returning them". (1967 I.G. Report, p. 27) If the mob was close enough to Orta to have pills smuggled in and out of Cuba, then they had to know that Orta had lost his position of accessibility. The other possibility exists, i.e., that the pills never left the United States and thus were available to give to de Varona when he was brought into the plot.

The question arises, then, as to whether the mob was pursuing their own assassination plot and the CIA operation or, what appears more likely, simply using the Agency for the ulterior motives previously outlined.

Turning to Phase Two of the operation which began in April 1962, the same possibilities exist. If Harvey and O'Connell are correct in assuming that Harvey had walked into an "on-going operation", then it can be assumed that the mob's relationship with de Varona, which pre-dated CIA participation according to FBI memos of 21 December 1960 and 18 January 1961 had continued uninterrupted after the Bay of Pigs. With the resumption of the CIA's participation, funding and material support could, once again, be returned to the Agency although de Varona would continue to deal through his mob contacts, Rosselli and "Maceo".

Due to the loose structure of Phase Two in terms of the ambiguous nature of the operational means of attack, the lack of identity of the potential assassins, the complete reliance of Harvey upon Rosselli's word that activities were actually being carried out, the Agency's lack of interest or ability to corroborate Rosselli's information, the speculation arises that the syndicate was not seriously trying to assassinate Castro after the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the solidification of Soviet influence on Castro's Cuba. Being solid businessmen, Trafficante, Lansky and other Cuba casino owners must have realized that the "golden goose" of Havana had laid its last egg, and that fortunes were to be made elsewhere. Certainly,

the evidence shows growning Lansky influence in the Bahamas, Las Vegas, and Trafficante projects in the Dominican Republic, and a new opportunity for [illegible] operations in Florida with the tremendous influx of Cuban exiles. It was also abundantly clear that the new Justice Department program on organized crime would never permit the "wide open" Cuba of the pre-Kennedy era even if Castro and all his Communist associates could be eliminated.

Despite the relatively useless business sense in continuing the assassination attempts against Castro in a substantive way, there still was a percentage in "stringing the Agency along". First, there was no expense to the syndicate because the Agency was providing full logistical support for Varona. Secondly, there was the mounting pressure from the FBI and Justice Department which had to be blunted, if possible. No better weapon to accomplish this goal could be found than to use one agency (CIA) against another (FBI). A brief look at the record shows the employment of this strategy at moments of crisis for those who participated in the plots.

1. Robert Maheu

   -- Quashing of Long Committee subpoena in 1966. (Interim Report, p. 79, note 3; Interview Edward P. Morgan)

   -- Solidification of position with CIA and with Hughes Organization. (Hughes was definitely told of the project by Maheu in November 1960 and was himself in an alliance with the CIA which, in fact, occurred later when Maheu was Hughes' principal agent.) (Interim Report, p. 75, note 2; Maheu Senate Testimony ?)

   -- Dispute with Hughes. See memo 20 May 1971 in Office of Security file on Edward P. Morgan.

2. John Rosselli

   -- Avoiding criminal prosecution. (Interim REport, p. 85, note 4)

   -- Use in legal memo in March 1971 to attempt to reduce sentence.

   -- Attempt to delay deportation hearings with INS which included Jack Anderson's personal intervention with IRS. (See Anderson Interview; CIA Rosselli file; CIA Office of Security file re: Edward P. Morgan)

3. Sam Giancana

-- October 1960 wiretap in Las Vegas where Giancana got Maheu to "take the heat" for him by claiming the tap was a result of the CIA plots.

-- Early 1962, intervention with FNU Farrell of INS re: possible deportation. (See Tab C Rosselli CIA file, stating that only Edwards, Osborn, Angleton, Rocca and Houston know.) [Phone check]

-- Attempts to ward off FBI surveillance in 1963. (1967 I.G. Report, p. 129)

-- Conversation with Sam Papich on 3 May 1967, Sam commented that Giancana and Rosselli have CIA "over a barrel" because of "that operation". He said that he doubted that the FBI would be able to do anything about either Rosselli or Giancana because of "their previous activities with your people." (1967 I.G. Report, p. 131)

NOTES RE: JACK ANDERSON
"CASTRO RETALIATION" THEORY

March 3, 1967)
March 7, 1967) Drew Pearson article

Source:

1. 1967 I.G. Report:

-- It is quite likely that Rosselli is the source, Morgan the channel, and Anderson and Pearson the recipients. (p. 126)

-- We may now assume that Pearson's story is not patched together from nits and pieces picked up here and there. His ultimate source, Rosselli, knows more about certain details than we do, and he evidently has talked. (p. 126)

Impact

The Rosselli- contact in Las Vegas in March is particularly disturbing. It lends substance to reports that Castro had something to do with the Kennedy assassination

in retaliation for U. S. attempts on Castro's life. We do not know that Castro actually tried to retaliate, but we do (CIA emphasis) know that there were such plots against Castro. Unhappily, it now appears that Garrison may also know this. (p. 127)

Maheu

Does have good reason for not wanting the story aired further. Unfavorable publicity might cause him to lose his lurcative client, Hughes. There might be some value to be gained from endorsing his suggestion that he approach Morgan and perhaps Rosselli and urge discretion.

-- The Pearson story, which is now causing us so much distress, includes one detail that is only found in Phase Two: the three-man team.

Comment: Not necessarily since Varona was involved in Phase One also, he may have begun the three-man team initially and only briefed Rosselli on the concept in Phase Two or Rosselli just didn't mention the three-man team to Maheu or O'Connell during Phase One.

Comment: In figuring out "ulterior motives" for a leak to Pearson, Agency makes the following point:

-- If protection was what the source was seeking, he could be better assured of getting it by a direct approach to CIA for help. (p. 125)

Since AGency cannot figure an ulterior motive, they decide that Rosselli is drinking too much and talking to Morgan, who is also drinking and talking to Greenspun (and Pearson).

Comment: Drew Pearson has not yet, as far as we know, used two of his best goodies: the story of the pills and the fact of the State Department meeting. (p. 127)

Comment: See p. 112 wherein "Drew Pearson claims to have a report that there was a high-level meeting at the Department of State at which plans for the assassination were discussed."

I.G. speculates that Pearson is talking about the 10 August 1962 meeting of the Special Group (Augmented) which was attended by Harvey. (p. 112)

(RFK was not present.)

2. Other Sources

a. Memo re: 15 February 1972

DCI aware that Rosselli was going to expose plots. He "decided to ignore his threats and take a calculated risk as to the consequences that may occur with the disclosure of his story. This was subsequently done by Rosselli or someone in his behalf furnishing Jack Anderson details of the incident." (Momo in Office of Security file re: Morgan)

3. Memo: 20 May 1971
Subject: Intertel

Mr. [Al Pease (former CIA),] now with Intertel, said Maheu and Anderson together on some oil mix deals...Recent exposure of Anderson re: Maheu's role in the Cuban Revolution was a deliberate exposure instigated by Robert Maheu using his son Peter, as an intermediary. Pease's theory is that Maheu probably would "scare them off" (i.e., Intertel would not want CIA stuff to embarrass Hughes).

Morgan making noises to certain Hughes officials that they had better take it easy on Maheu because of his past involvement with CIA (Memo in Security file re: Morgan).

4. Memo - 19 November 1970

-- Harvey had contacts with Rosselli in November-December 1967 and January 1968 following Rosselli Conviction.

-- 17 November 1970

Morgan had received a call from Tom Waddin who represented Rosselli that Rosselli faced deportation and would blow story. DCI decided to ignore threat and Maheu agreed.

"Maheu further advised that he was not concerned about any publicity aa it affected him personally."

5. 19 December 1967

-- Series of conversations instigated by Harvey on Rosselli's behalf to get CIA intervention

directly or at least discover how good Government case against Rosselli was.

-- Calls from Rosselli began in October to Harvey. Rosselli knew what Agency had done for Maheu with Senator Long because Ed Morgan told Rosselli.

-- Also, the Director (Helms) had sent Harvey a news clipping re: Agency use of Giancana (presumably the August 1963 Chicago story by Sandy Smith).

Rosselli said that the leak came from Senator Kennedy's office when Kennedy was still Attorney General.

6. Memo 28 April 1967

-- O'Connell sent to Las Vegas to find out source of Pearson story.

-- Maheu admitted telling Morgan some of the Phase One operation due to Agency delaying on Long Committee subpoena.

-- Maheu visibly upset over Morgan going to Pearson and asked if he (Maheu) had been identified as the "client" by Morgan because he was afraid of the publicity affecting his relationship with Hughes.

-- Maheu denied discussing with Rosselli latter phase of [redacted] and said he had no knowledge of operation after April 1962.

-- Rosselli met Morgan through Hank Greenspun in the 1950's.

-- Maheu recalled that Morgan and Rosselli met with Garrison in Las Vegas during March 1967. Under the impression that Rosselli seeking legal advice from Morgan but did not know the circumstances.

-- Rosselli under pressure from FBI, drinking heavily and had a 19-year-old girl.

-- Believed Morgan had done some work for Pearson and did know that Anderson had more than a passing acquaintance with Morgan.

-- Morgan also tight with Pat Cayne of NSC.