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Memorandum

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TO : Mr. A. H. Belmont

DATE: 12/3/63

FROM : W. C. Sullivan

9803 RAN/mdc

Declassify on: OADR JFK

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

SYNOPSIS

On 11/25/63 at Mexico City, Mexico, information received from Gilberto Alvarado Ugarte, Nicaraguan national [redacted] that on 9/18/63 he saw Lee Harvey Oswald in Cuban Consulate in Mexico City and witnessed payment of $6500 to Oswald. Alvarado claimed among those also present when money passed to Oswald was Sylvia Duran, Mexican national employed in Cuban Consulate. Alvarado further claimed he, on 4 occasions in late 9/63, had tried to furnish above information to U. S. Embassy, Mexico City, but Embassy switchboard did not put him in contact with any U.S. representatives. Search of Embassy switchboard records failed to disclose any such calls were logged. Bureau investigation established Oswald was in New Orleans from 9/17 until approximately 9/25/63 when he departed for Mexico. Oswald's presence in Mexico from 9/26 until 10/23/63 verified.

U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Thomas C. Mann, through State Department requested FBI assistance in directing instant investigation in Mexico. Bureau Supervisor Laurence P. Keenan designated to go to Mexico City to assist and arrived 11/27/63. Mexican authorities interviewed Sylvia Duran and are convinced she is telling truth when she states she recalled meeting Oswald at Cuban Consulate on 9/27 and 9/28/63 and unsuccessfully endeavored to assist him in obtaining Cuban and Russian visas. Mexican authorities also convinced Duran not involved in any political activity in Cuban Consulate and confident her duties restricted to routine consular matters. On 11/28/63 authority obtained to release Alvarado to Mexican authorities for interrogation. On 11/29/63 Mexican authorities advised Alvarado's story "fascinating" and stated he was unable to pick out photo of Duran. Later on 11/29/63, information received Alvarado admitted to Mexican authorities his story fabrication designed to provoke U.S. into kicking Castro out of Cuba. [CIA, Mexico] advised [Nicaraguan] source states approximately 20 to 25% of information previously furnished by Alvarado unreliable and that he had reputation of considering himself more intelligent than his control officer.

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On 11/30/63 Ambassador Mann advised since Alvarado's statements fabrication, no longer necessary for SA Keenan to remain in Mexico. Keenan returned Washington, D.C., 12/1/63. Information received that Alvarado now claims his original statements true and that he recanted under fear of violence from Mexican authorities.

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LPK:mls (9)
1-Mr. Belmont; 1-Mr. Sullivan; 1-Mr. Rosen;
1-Mr. D. E. Moore; 1-Mr. Sizoo; 1-Mr. Branigan;
1-Mr. Keenan; 1-Liaison

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witnessing the passing of $6500 to be true. This official advised that Alvarado was being treated cordially and that he was either telling the truth or was the world's best liar. This official advised that Alvarado's interrogation was continuing and that this interview would now be conducted in a little stronger manner. He furnished no further elaboration on this statement but stated that Alvarado, who is apparently familiar with the interior of the Cuban Consulate, was unable to pick out a photograph of Sylvia Duran from a group of photos of female individuals.

On the evening of 11/29/63, Legat, Mexico, received information from a high-level Mexican official that Alvarado reportedly admitted his story was a pure fabrication designed to provoke the U. S. into kicking Castro out of Cuba. On 11/30/63, [Winn Scott, Chief, CIA,] Mexico City, advised that he had received information [from Mexican authorities] who were interviewing Alvarado that Alvarado had admitted that information furnished by him regarding Oswald's presence in the Cuban Embassy on 9/18/63 and the information regarding a pay-off to Oswald was a pure fabrication for the above-mentioned reason. [Scott] advised that [(S)] an official of the [Nicaraguan Security Service] who is very familiar with Alvarado, arrived in Mexico City on 11/29/63 and during the last few hours of Alvarado's interrogation was in a room adjoining that room in which Alvarado was being interviewed. As a consequence, he was kept advised of the progress of Alvarado's interview. According to [Scott, [(S)] had advised that Alvarado in the past had furnished information concerning [Nicaraguan] Communist Party activities and from 20 to 25% of the information furnished by Alvarado was unreliable. [(S)] described Alvarado as a person who believed himself to be more intelligent than his control officer. [Scott] stated no information was available that the Mexican authorities had used any violence in securing an admission from Alvarado that his statements were fabrication.

Investigation by both Legat, Mexico, and [CIA, Mexico] looking towards identifying other witnesses allegedly present in the Cuban Consulate at the time Alvarado claims he saw Oswald receiving the above-mentioned $6500, was unable to uncover the white male who possessed a Canadian passport or the red-haired Cuban Negro. It is noted Cuban Vice Consul Azcue reportedly returned to Cuban on 11/18/63. Mexican authorities have been requested to assist in the possible identification of the above-mentioned white male with Canadian passport and red-haired Cuban Negro who allegedly witnessed the pay-off to Oswald. However, it appears that Alvarado's descriptions of those persons who reportedly witnessed the pay-off are intentionally vague, thus making it impossible to identify or interrogate them and leaving Duran as the only logical person available to confirm or refute Alvarado's statements.

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Memo to Mr. Belmont
RE: ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

On 11/30/63, Ambassador Mann advised that since it was determined that Alvarado's statements were false, it was not necessary for SA Keenan to remain away from his duties in Washington. He expressed his sincere appreciation for the Bureau's cooperation and assistance, and requested that his personal gratitude be conveyed to the Director.

SA Keenan returned to Washington, D. C., on 12/1/63.

As of 11/30/63, Alvarado was being held by Mexican authorities on the charge that he illegally entered Mexico. Alvarado, in his statement to Mexican authorities, advised that he had entered Mexico without a Mexican visa and after bribing a Mexican Immigration inspector. Mexican authorities advised [CIA,] Mexico, that Alvarado would probably be deported to Nicaragua in the near future.

Legat, Mexico City, by cable 12/2/63 advised that Alvarado in his statement to [redacted] claimed that his original statements were true and that he recanted under fear of violence from the Mexican authorities.

W.C.S.

ADDENDUM BY W. C. SULLIVAN/LL - 12/3/63

Alvarado should be immediately subjected to a polygraph examination. This is being handled.

WCS

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