

#### IV. THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES AND THE WARREN COMMISSION: JANUARY TO SEPTEMBER 1964

Legally, the assassination of President Kennedy and the subsequent murder of Lee Harvey Oswald were within the jurisdiction of Texas state authorities. However, in the days immediately following the assassination, many Americans questioned how a President could be assassinated despite the vast U.S. intelligence apparatus. Many were also openly skeptical of the FBI findings that Oswald was the lone assassin.

Congress and the President felt that public concern could only be assuaged by a thorough and independent investigation of the assassination. Two resolutions were submitted in Congress calling for congressional investigations into the circumstances surrounding the assassination. The State of Texas established a Commission for the same purpose. The Warren Commission, established by President Johnson's Executive Order on November 29, 1963, preempted the field.

The President stated that he established the Commission to ensure a thorough and independent investigation of the circumstances surrounding the assassination.<sup>1</sup> Because the only previous investigations of the assassination were those conducted by the Dallas Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and recognizing public criticism and skepticism directed toward these agencies, it would appear that the Commission's investigation was to be independent from the Bureau's. As the Warren Commission's report noted: "Because of the numerous rumors and theories, the Commission concluded that the public interest in insuring that the truth was ascertained could not be met by merely by accepting the reports or the analyses of Federal or State agencies."<sup>2</sup>

When it began its substantive work in mid-December, the Commission received a tremendous number of reports from various Federal and State agencies. By far the largest number of reports were supplied the Commission by the FBI. The FBI forwarded a five-volume December 9, 1963 report summarizing the Bureau's investigation immediately after the assassination. Subsequently, the Commission requested and received the report of the field investigation from which the December 9, 1963, report had been derived. The Warren Commission noted in its report:

As these investigative reports were received, the staff began analyzing and summarizing them. The members of the legal staff, divided into teams, proceeded to organize the facts revealed by these investigations, determine the issues, sort out the unresolved problems, and recommend additional investigation by the Commission. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Warren Commission Report, p. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Warren Commission Report, p. x.

After reviewing the accumulating materials, the Commission directed numerous additional requests to Federal and State agencies.

Because of the diligence, cooperation, and facilities of Federal investigative agencies, it was unnecessary for the Commission to employ investigators, other than the members of the Commission's legal staff.<sup>3</sup>

With only minor isolated exceptions, the entire body of factual material from which the Commission derived its findings was supplied by the intelligence community, primarily, the FBI. Even when material was provided by an agency other than the FBI, that agency usually checked with the Bureau before supplying information to the Commission. Moreover, CIA and Secret Service personnel reviewed Director Hoover's testimony before the Commission prior to the appearance of CIA Director McCone and DDP Helms and Secret Service Director Rowley to ensure that there were no conflicts in testimony.

Thus, the Commission was dependent upon the intelligence agencies for the facts and preliminary analysis. The Commission and its staff did analyze the material and frequently requested follow-up agency investigations; but if evidence on a particular point was not supplied to the Commission, this second step would obviously not be reached, and the Commission's findings would be formulated without the benefit of any information on the omitted point.

On the crucial question of whether Oswald was involved in a conspiracy to assassinate the President, the Warren Commission noted that the Secret Service, CIA and FBI and Treasury, Justice, State and Defense Departments independently arrived at the same conclusion, that there was no evidence of a conspiracy.<sup>5</sup>

It must be remembered that the purpose of the Committee's inquiry was to allow for an evaluation of the intelligence agencies (both prior and subsequent to the assassination) *and* the process by which information was provided to the Warren Commission. The following section discusses the FBI's and the CIA's relationship to the Warren Commission.

#### *A. The Relationship Between the FBI and the Warren Commission*

Director Hoover initially opposed President Johnson's decision to create the Warren Commission;<sup>6</sup> but once the Commission was established by Executive Order, he had to accept that decision and respond to the Commission's requests.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, he repeatedly told others in the Bureau that the Warren Commission was "looking for gaps in the FBI's investigation" and was "seeking to criticize the FBI."<sup>8</sup> The memoranda of other senior Bureau officials also reveal a

<sup>3</sup> Warren Commission Report, pp. xii, xiii.

<sup>5</sup> Warren Commission Report, p. 374.

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, DeLoach, Rosen and Sullivan, 11/29/63.

<sup>7</sup> Cover Sheet, 11/29/63, with attached memorandum from Hoover to Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, DeLoach, Rosen and Sullivan, 11/29/63.

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, Sullivan, Rosen, FBI Inspector and DeLoach, 1/31/64; Hoover handwritten note on memorandum from Rosen to Belmont, 4/4/64.

deep concern that the FBI might be charged with some dereliction in connection with the President's death.<sup>9</sup> Thus, although the Commission had to rely on the FBI to conduct the primary investigation of the President's death, their relationship was at times almost adversarial.<sup>10</sup> Such a relationship was not conducive to the cooperation necessary for a thorough and exhaustive investigation.

*1. The FBI's Perception of the Warren Commission as an Adversary*

In the days immediately following the assassination of President Kennedy, the Bureau was subjected to its first major public criticism in years for its handling of the Lee Harvey Oswald security case before the assassination. Many Americans were skeptical of the Bureau's investigative findings that Oswald was the assassin and that he acted alone. If the Warren Commission reported that the Bureau's handling of the assassination investigation or the Oswald security case was deficient in some manner, the FBI would have been open to embarrassment and criticism. Given this possibility, and FBI Director Hoover's known hostility to criticism or embarrassment of the Bureau, it is not at all surprising that from its inception, the Commission was perceived as an adversary by both Hoover and senior FBI officials.

After the Warren Commission had been established, each time Hoover received word that a particular person was being considered for the Commission staff, he asked "what the Bureau had" on the individual. Although derogatory information pertaining to both Commission members and staff was brought to Mr. Hoover's attention, the Bureau has informed the Committee staff that there is no documentary evidence which indicates that such information was disseminated while the Warren Commission was in session.<sup>12</sup>

On December 10, 1963, Hoover informed Assistant Director Alan Belmont that he would be "personally responsible for reviewing every piece of paper that went to the Warren Commission." Hoover also designated the FBI Headquarters inspector who had previously been assigned to supervise the Dallas field investigation as the Bureau liaison with the Warren Commission. In a memorandum recounting the December 10th meeting, where this inspector was briefed on his new assignment, the Director wrote:

I told [the inspector] that I wanted him to establish the closest and most amiable working relationship with Mr. Ran-

<sup>9</sup> Memorandum from Section Chief to Sullivan, 2/18/64; memorandum from Section Chief to Sullivan, 4/3/64.

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, DeLoach, Rosen, FBI Inspector and Sullivan, 1/31/64, p. 4; Hoover handwritten note on memorandum from Rosen to Belmont, 4/4/64.

<sup>12</sup> The Committee and the Bureau defined their terms, such that "dissemination" includes informing the person himself of the derogatory information. Additionally, in order to ensure the protection of individual privacy, the Committee did not request access to any derogatory information.

kin. I told him that I had personally known Mr. Rankin quite well since he had served as Solicitor General under Attorneys General Brownell and Rogers.

I also alerted [the inspector] that there were indications that the Chief Justice, who headed the Presidential Commission, was endeavoring to find fault with the FBI and certain information had been leaked by the Chief Justice to [a newspaperman] which was critical of the FBI's functioning in Dallas prior to the assassination.

I told [the inspector] and Mr. Belmont that the Chief Justice had now demanded all of the so-called "raw" reports upon which the FBI report of the assassination was predicated, and in doing so that Chief Justice had characterized the FBI report as being in "skeleton form." I stated the Chief Justice had further added in his statement to the press: "In order to evaluate it we have to see the materials on which the report was prepared."

I stated that this statement by the Chief Justice I felt was entirely unwarranted and could certainly have been phrased better so as not to leave the impression, at least by innuendo, that the FBI had not done a thorough job.<sup>13</sup>

On January 28, 1964, Lee Rankin met with Hoover at the Commission's direction to discuss the allegation that Oswald was an FBI informant. According to a Hoover memorandum of January 31, 1964:

Rankin stated that the Commission was concerned as to how this matter could be resolved, and it was for this reason that they asked him to see me. He stated that the Commission did not desire to initiate an investigation on the outside . . . as it might appear the Commission was investigating the FBI.

I told Mr. Rankin that Lee Harvey Oswald was never at any time a confidential informant, undercover agent, or even a source of information for the FBI, and I would like to see that clearly stated on the record of the Commission and I would be willing to so state under oath.

I commented to him that I had not appreciated what I interpreted as carping criticism by the Chief Justice when he referred to the Bureau's report originally furnished to the Commission as being a "skeleton report."<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the Warren Commission's existence, Alan Belmont kept Hoover informed daily on:

1. the internal Commission meetings and decisions;
2. the areas in which the Commission was requesting information, or further FBI investigation; and

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, 12/26/63.

<sup>14</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Mohr, Sullivan, Rosen, FBI Inspector and DeLoach, 1/31/64.

3. the materials which the Bureau intended to provide to the Commission.<sup>15</sup>

On various occasions, Hoover learned that the Commission members or staff had stated that they were impressed with the testimony of Bureau personnel and the investigation conducted for the Bureau.<sup>16</sup> His handwritten notation on an April 4, 1964, memorandum succinctly states his usual response to such complimentary remarks:

I place no credence in any complimentary remarks made by Warren nor the Commission. They were looking for FBI "gaps" and having found none yet they try to get sympathy.<sup>17</sup>

In an April 3, 1964 memorandum to William Sullivan, a Bureau Supervisor wrote:

While complimenting the Bureau for its cooperation, the President's Commission, by letter dated 3/26/64, forwarded what purports to be 30 questions (by actual count there are 52 as some of the enumerated questions have more than one part) to which they request a reasoned response in reasonable detail and with such substantiating materials as seem appropriate.

The questions are those of a cross-examining attorney and it is evident that this is a cross-examination of the FBI or a part of it in the case of the assassination of President Kennedy.<sup>18</sup>

Mr. Hoover noted on the memorandum, "Their so-called compliments of the Bureau's work are empty and have no sincerity."<sup>19</sup> Similarly, when he was informed that the Commission intended to send two of its staff members to Mexico City, the Director "expressed concern as to how lawyers on the Commission could spot gaps in our investigation."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For example, memorandum from C. D. DeLoach to J. Mohr, 12/12/63; memorandum from A. Rosen to A. Belmont, 4/4/64.

FBI documents also reveal that James Angleton of the CIA passed information he received about the Warren Commission investigation to the FBI. On May 13, 1964, 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." Angleton then informed Sullivan as to the questions he believed McCone would be asked, and the "replies that will be given," two of which series are set forth below:

(1) Q: Was Oswald ever an agent of the CIA?

A: No.

(2) Q: Does the CIA have any evidence showing that a conspiracy existed to assassinate President Kennedy?

A: No.

(Memorandum, W. C. Sullivan to A. H. Belmont, 5/13/64.)

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum from A. Rosen to A. Belmont, 4/4/64.

<sup>17</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from Rosen to Belmont, 4/4/64.

<sup>18</sup> Memorandum from Section Chief to Sullivan, 4/3/64.

<sup>19</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from Section Chief to Sullivan, 4/3/64.

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum from Section Chief to Sullivan, 2/18/64.

## 2. *The FBI's Handling of the Oswald Security Case*

Immediately after the assassination, J. Edgar Hoover ordered a complete analysis of "any investigative deficiencies in the Oswald case."<sup>21</sup> On December 10, 1963, Assistant Director J. H. Gale of the Inspection Division reported that there were a number of investigative and reporting delinquencies in the handling of the Oswald security case. Gale wrote:

Oswald should have been on the Security Index; his wife should have been interviewed before the assassination, and investigation intensified—not held in abeyance—after Oswald contacted Soviet Embassy in Mexico.<sup>22</sup>

In the paragraph immediately preceding Gale's recommendations for disciplinary actions, he observes:

Concerning the administrative action recommended hereinafter, there is the possibility that the Presidential Commission investigating instant matter will subpoena the investigating Agents. If this occurs, the possibility then exists that the Agents may be questioned concerning whether administrative action had been taken against them. However, it is felt these possibilities are sufficiently remote that the recommended action should go forward at this time. It appears unlikely at this time that the Commission's subpoenas would go down to the Agent level.<sup>23</sup>

Director Hoover responded, "In any event such gross incompetency cannot be overlooked nor administrative action postponed."<sup>24</sup>

Assistant Director Cartha DeLoach responded to Gale's report as follows:

I recommended that the suggested disciplinary action be held in abeyance until the findings of the Presidential Commission have been made public. This action is recommended inasmuch as any "leak" to the general public, or particularly to the communications media, concerning the FBI taking disciplinary action against its personnel with respect to captioned matter would be assumed as a direct admission that we are responsible for negligence which might have resulted in the assassination of the President. At the present time there are so many wild rumors, gossip, and speculation that even the slightest hint to outsiders concerning disciplinary action of this nature would result in considerable adverse reaction against the FBI. I do not believe that any of our personnel will be subpoenaed. Chief Justice Warren has indicated he plans to issue no subpoenas. There is, however, the possibility that the public will learn of disciplinary action being

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<sup>21</sup> The Bureau's handling of the pre-assassination Oswald case is discussed in Appendix A.

<sup>22</sup> Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 12/10/63.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 12/10/63.

taken against our personnel and, therefore, start a bad, unjustifiable reaction.<sup>25</sup>

Director Hoover, however, responded to DeLoach's recommendation, "I do not concur."<sup>26</sup>

On December 10, 1963, 17 Bureau employees (five field investigative agents, one field supervisor, three special agents in charge, four headquarters supervisors, two headquarters section chiefs, one inspector, and one assistant director) were censured or placed on probation for "shortcomings in connection with the investigation of Oswald prior to the assassination."<sup>27</sup> Although the transfers of some of these agents were discussed at that time, certain transfers were held in abeyance until the issuance of the Warren Commission's report on September 24, 1964.<sup>28</sup>

One of the specific shortcomings identified by Assistant Director Gale was the failure to include Oswald's name on the Security Index.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, of the seventeen agents, supervisors, and senior officials who were disciplined, not a single one believed that Oswald met the criteria for the Security Index. In this regard, Assistant to the Director Alan Belmont noted in an addendum to Mr. Gale's December 10, 1963 memorandum:

It is significant to note that all of the supervisors and officials who came into contact with this case at the seat of government, as well as agents in the field, are unanimous in the opinion that Oswald *did not* meet the criteria for the Security Index. If this is so, it would appear that the criteria are not sufficiently specific to include a case such as Oswald's and, rather than take the position that all of these employees were mistaken in their judgment, the criteria should be changed. This has now been recommended by Assistant Director Gale.<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Hoover made the following handwritten notations next to Mr. Belmont's addendum: "They were worse than mistaken. Certainly no one in full possession of all his faculties can claim Oswald didn't fall within this criteria."<sup>31</sup>

On September 24, 1964, the same day the Warren Commission's report was officially released, Assistant Director William C. Sullivan wrote:

In answer to the question as to why Lee Harvey Oswald was not on the Security Index, based on the facts concerning

<sup>25</sup> Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 12/10/63.

<sup>26</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 12/10/63.

<sup>27</sup> Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 12/10/63.

<sup>28</sup> Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 9/30/64.

<sup>29</sup> Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 12/10/63.

See Book II, "Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans," pp. 91-93 for a discussion of the Security Index. It is important to note, however, that under the procedures then in effect, the inclusion of Oswald on Security Index would not have resulted in the dissemination of Oswald's name to the Secret Service.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 12/10/63.

Oswald which were available prior to his assassination of the President, it was the judgment of the agents handling the case in Dallas and New Orleans, the field supervisor, and the SAC in New Orleans, as well as supervisors at the Seat of Government, that such facts did not warrant the inclusion of Oswald in the Security Index. The matter has, of course, been re-examined in the Bureau and Mr. Gale by memorandum 12/10/63 expressed the opinion that Oswald should have been placed on the Security Index prior to 11/22/63. The Director concurred with Mr. Gale's opinion and administrative action has been taken.<sup>32</sup>

Hoover wrote on this Sullivan memorandum that the Bureau personnel who failed to include Oswald on the Security Index, "could not have been more stupid . . . and now that the Bureau has been debunked publicly I intend to take additional administrative action."<sup>33</sup>

Certain FBI agents testified before the Warren Commission on May 5, 1964. One of the agents had previously requested to talk to Hoover, and he learned from Alan Belmont on the morning of May 6, 1964, that he would be allowed to see the Director later that day.<sup>34</sup> According to the agent, the Director could not have been more pleasant; he quoted Hoover as saying that "Everything was in order" and that he had "nothing to worry about."<sup>35</sup> Indeed, this is exactly what the agent recounted to his special agent in charge upon his return to Dallas.<sup>36</sup> Mr. Hoover's version of the meeting differs considerably from the agents. According to the Director:

I discussed with him the situation which had developed in Dallas . . . and of embarrassment which had been caused.<sup>37</sup>

On September 28, 1964, four days after the Commission's report had been issued, eight of the Bureau employees against whom disciplinary action had been taken in December 1963 were again censured, or put on probation, for reasons identical to those that led to action being taken against them in December 1963. Some of the eight were also transferred on this occasion.<sup>38</sup> In addition to the above eight, three other employees who had not been disciplined in December 1963 were disciplined as follows:

1. A Special Agent in Dallas was censured and placed on probation for failing to properly handle and supervise this matter;
2. An inspector at FBI Headquarters was censured for not exercising sufficient imagination and foresight to initiate action to have Security Index material disseminated to Secret Service;

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum from W. C. Sullivan to A. H. Belmont, 9/24/64.

<sup>33</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from Sullivan to Belmont, 9/24/64.

<sup>34</sup> FBI Special Agent, 12/5/75, p. 71.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> SAC testimony, 12/20/75, p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Tolson, 5/6/64.

<sup>38</sup> Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 9/30/64.



3. An Assistant to the Director at FBI Headquarters was censured for his overall responsibility in this entire matter.<sup>39</sup>

In a memorandum disseminated to senior bureau officials on October 12, 1964, Hoover noted:

There is no question in my mind but that we failed in carrying through some of the most salient aspects of the Oswald investigation. It ought to be a lesson to all, but I doubt if some even realize it now.<sup>40</sup>

J. Edgar Hoover did not believe that these disciplinary actions would ever become known outside the Bureau, and they did not until October 1975. Although none of the information made available to the Commission by the FBI suggests the slightest investigative deficiency in the Oswald security case, Bureau officials were continually concerned with the possibility that the FBI might be regarded as "responsible for negligence that resulted in the assassination of President Kennedy because of pre-assassination investigative deficiencies in the Oswald case."<sup>41</sup>

### 3. *The Bureau's Reaction to the Warren Commission Report*

On September 25, 1964, when the FBI received a copy of the Warren Commission's Report, the Director noted: "I want this carefully reviewed as it pertains to FBI shortcomings by Gale. Chapter 8 tears us to pieces."<sup>42</sup> On September 29, 1964, Mr. Hoover, after reading a *Washington Post* article captioned "Praise is Voiced for Staff Engaged in Warren Report," directed that the Bureau's files on the 84 staff members listed in the article "be checked."<sup>43</sup> On October 2, 1964, the Director was informed that "Bureau files contain derogatory information concerning the following individuals and their relatives."<sup>44</sup>

On September 30, 1964, Assistant Director Gale presented Associate Director Clyde Tolson with a memorandum captioned "Shortcomings in handling of Lee Harvey Oswald matter by FBI personnel." Gale wrote:

The Commission has now set forth in a very damning manner some of the same glaring weaknesses for which we previously disciplined our personnel such as lack of vigorous investiga-

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Administrative Cover Sheet to memorandum from FBI Supervisor to Gale, 10/12/64.

<sup>41</sup> Memorandum from A. Belmont to C. Tolson, 10/1/64.

<sup>42</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from DeLoach to Mohr, 9/25/64.

<sup>43</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on a 9/29/64 *Washington Post* article, "The Federal Diary."

<sup>44</sup> Memorandum from Rosen to Belmont, 10/2/64.

On November 8, 1966, memoranda were furnished to Presidential Assistant Marvin Watson, setting forth background information, including derogatory materials on seven private citizens who wrote unfavorable articles concerning the Warren Commission findings. A February 3, 1975, FBI memorandum which discusses these memoranda and their dissemination in 1966 to the White House recounts:

No information was developed or furnished to the White House concerning immoral conduct on the part of the seven above listed critics of the Warren Commission with the exception of the information furnished regarding [identity of individual deleted for reasons of privacy].

tion after we had established that Oswald visited the Soviet Embassy in Mexico.<sup>45</sup>

Gale notes several instances where the testimony of FBI agents makes the Bureau "look ridiculous and taints its public image." These instances include:

One agent testified that conditions in the Dallas police station at the time of detention and interrogation of Oswald were not "too much unlike Grand Central Station at rush hour, maybe like Yankee Stadium during the World Series games." It is questionable whether the agent should have described conditions in such an editorializing and flamboyant manner but rather should have indicated conditions were crowded.<sup>46</sup>

More importantly, Gale's memorandum reveals a dichotomy between the Bureau's "public position" and what Bureau officials regarded as the truth:

The Commission report indicates that we did not have a stop on Oswald's passport with the Department of State and did not know Oswald applied for a passport in June 1963, to travel to Western European countries, Soviet Union, Finland and Poland. This is another specific example of how this case was improperly investigated. The same personnel are responsible for this example as were previously criticized for not using appropriate techniques and making a more vigorous and thorough investigation, to determine with whom Oswald in contact or whether he had intelligence assignment. *The Bureau by letter to the Commission indicated that the facts did not warrant placing a stop on the passport as our investigation disclosed no evidence that Oswald was acting under the instructions or on behalf of any foreign Government or or instrumentality thereof. Inspector feels it was proper at that time to take this "public" position. However, it is felt that with Oswald's background we should have had a stop on his passport, particularly since we did not know definitely whether or not he had any intelligence assignments at that time. [Emphasis added.]*<sup>47</sup>

Not surprisingly, Gale states in the "observations" section of this memorandum:

We previously took administrative action against those responsible for the investigative shortcomings in this case some of which were brought out by the Commission. It is felt that it is appropriate at this time to consider further administrative action against those primarily culpable for the derelictions in this case which have now had the effect of *publicly embarrassing* the Bureau. [Emphasis added.]<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 9/30/64.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

After reviewing the Gale memorandum, Alan Belmont forwarded a one-page memorandum to Clyde Tolson on October 1, 1964. Belmont argued that:

I think we are making a tactical error by taking this disciplinary action in this case at this time. The Warren Commission report has just been released. It contains criticism of the FBI. We are currently taking aggressive steps to challenge the findings of the Warren Commission insofar as they pertain to the FBI. It is most important, therefore, that we do not provide a foothold for our critics or the general public to serve upon to say in effect, 'See, the Commission is right, Mr. Hoover has taken strong action against personnel involved in this case and thus admits that the Bureau was in error.'<sup>49</sup>

Mr. Hoover disagreed with Belmont's observations, writing:

We were wrong. The administrative action approved by me will stand. I do not intend to palliate actions which have resulted in forever destroying the Bureau as the top level investigative organization.<sup>50</sup>

By letter dated September 30, 1964, the Bureau informed the White House and Acting Attorney General Katzenbach that "the Commission's report is seriously inaccurate insofar as its treatment of the FBI is concerned."<sup>51</sup> In an October 1, 1964 memorandum to Clyde Tolson, Alan Belmont considered whether a copy of this letter should be sent to the Warren Commission. Belmont wrote:

It is noted that this letter is an indictment of the Commission in that we charge that in the Commission's approach, instead of adopting a realistic and objective attitude, the Commission was more interested in avoiding possible criticism. Bearing this in mind, if we send a copy of this letter to the Commission now, it will probably make the letter public together with a definite answer.

I suggest we may want to wait a few days before we consider sending a copy of this letter to the Commission. Certainly we owe no courtesy to the Commission.<sup>52</sup>

After reviewing the October 1, 1964 Belmont memorandum, Hoover wrote:

We might as well lay down and let anybody and everybody kick us around and not *defend nor retaliate*.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Memorandum from Belmont to Tolson, 10/1/64.

<sup>50</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from Belmont to Tolson, 10/1/64. Mr. Tolson also disagreed with Mr. Belmont. In an addendum to the Gale memorandum Tolson wrote: "Most of the administrative directions with respect to the Security Index, the prompt submission of reports, etc., and not the Oswald case per se." (Memorandum from Gale to Tolson, 9/30/64.)

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Hoover to Jenkins, 9/30/64.

<sup>52</sup> Memorandum from Belmont to Tolson, 10/1/69.

<sup>53</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on the memorandum from Belmont to Tolson, 10/1/64.

On October 1, 1964, a senior Bureau official instructed the FBI Inspector, who had handled the Bureau's liaison with the Warren Commission, to telephonically contact Commission General Counsel J. Lee Rankin and inform him that "he did the Bureau a great disservice and had out-McCarthyed McCarthy."<sup>54</sup> A memorandum dated October 2, 1964, reflects that this request was carried out.

On October 6, 1964, Cartha D. DeLoach forwarded to Assistant Director John Mohr a memorandum captioned "Criticism of the FBI Following the Assassination of the President," in which he wrote:

The criticism concerning the FBI and its role in events surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy raises three questions which merit consideration at this time.

(1) What is the public image of the FBI at the present time?

Certainly, it cannot be denied that the public image of the FBI has been affected in certain areas by the criticism made of the Bureau and its role in the events taking place prior to the assassination of the President. It is believed this situation reached one stage during the days immediately following this event and was climaxed by Dallas Chief of Police Curry's statements which left the implication this Bureau was seriously derelict in discharging its responsibilities as an intelligence agency.

The second stage, the most acute, followed the issuance of the Warren Report.

While there is admittedly no absolute way to assess a public image, it is believed the image of the FBI improved steadily since the week following the assassination, and it improved immeasurably up until the release of the Warren Report. At the time we suffered a rough setback. Following the release of the Director's testimony, we have been well on the road back to good prestige. There is every indication this improvement will continue if we follow our current program regarding this situation.

(2) What has been done to counteract this criticism of the FBI?

Immediately following the assassination, we undertook a program designed to eliminate the misunderstanding as to the statutory responsibilities of the Secret Service and the FBI which existed among the uninformed . . . Every appropriate medium such as the news media, radio scripts, FBI tours, correspondence, speeches and police training was used to clear the air concerning our responsibility.

For the more educated group, those who were not necessarily biased, and who were aware of the statutory authority of the FBI we furnished full explanations for our actions prior to the assassination with respect to Lee Harvey Oswald.

<sup>54</sup> Memorandum from Rosen to Belmont, 10/2/64.

The FBI Inspector could not recall the identity of the Bureau official who instructed him to make the phone call. (Staff Interview of FBI Inspector, 3/20/76.)

This was designed to convince them that this Bureau did not fail to properly evaluate the information available on Oswald prior to November 22, 1963, and that, in light of the facts available and the authority granted within which to act, we were not derelict in disseminating pertinent information to proper authorities.

(3) What should be our future course in this matter?

The liberal press, with the exception of the "New York Times," and its friends will continue to make a determined effort to place the FBI on the defensive; however, it is not felt we should engage in any prolonged debate with them. By keeping the argument going, we are diverting public attention from Secret Service and the State Department and their culpability.

The Director has said that "nothing is more devastating to a smear than an offensive of real outstanding accomplishments." Our attention and energies should be directed toward this end in the coming months.<sup>55</sup>

At the bottom of the last page of this DeLoach memorandum, Mr. Hoover made the following handwritten notation:

The FBI will never live down this smear which could have been so easily avoided if there had been proper supervision and initiative.<sup>56</sup>

#### *B. Relationship Between the CIA and the Warren Commission*

After the CIA's initial review of the assassination was completed by the Western Hemisphere desk officer in December 1963, Helms assigned responsibility for investigative matters related to the President's assassination to the Counterintelligence Division headed by James Angleton.<sup>57</sup>

When the Warren Commission began to request information from CIA, Angleton directed one of his subordinates to become the "point of record" for coordinating research undertaken for the Commission. This CIA analyst said it was his responsibility to know what materials the CIA had on the assassination and to know what research was being conducted.<sup>58</sup>

This analyst chose three others from the Counterintelligence Staff to work with him. They were experts in the KGB and Soviet matters, and were not affiliated with the CIA Cuban affairs staff. Cuban operations were uniquely compartmented within CIA. As one witness described the Special Affairs Staff, it was "sort of a microcosm of the Agency with emphasis on Cuban matters."<sup>59</sup> SAS had its own counterintelligence staff which coordinated with Angleton's, but was not subordinate to it.

<sup>55</sup> Memorandum from DeLoach to Mohr, 10/6/64.

<sup>56</sup> Hoover's handwritten note on memorandum from DeLoach to Mohr, 10/6/64.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter III, p. 31.

<sup>58</sup> Staff summary of interview of CIA analyst, 3/15/76.

<sup>59</sup> Chief SAS/CI testimony, 5/10/76, p. 6.

Files on this phase of the CIA investigation reflect the Soviet orientation of the investigation. The CIA staff exhaustively analyzed the significance of Oswald's activities in the Soviet Union, but there is no corresponding CIA analysis of the significance of Oswald's contacts with pro-Castro and anti-Castro groups in the United States.

During the Warren Commission investigation, the Commission worked directly with designated CIA officials. The Commission staff was given access to CIA files on the assassination, including material obtained from sensitive sources and methods.

However, the Warren Commission staff did not work directly with anyone from SAS. Although the CIA centered its work on the assassination in its Counterintelligence Division, the Chief of SAS Counterintelligence testified that the SAS had no "direct" role in the investigation of the assassination.<sup>60</sup>

SAS was not completely removed from investigative work on the assassination. The Counterintelligence Staff occasionally requested a name check or similar information from SAS, but there is no evidence whatsoever that SAS was asked or ever volunteered to analyze Oswald's contacts with Cuban groups. The Chief of SAS/CI testified he could recall no such analyses.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, SAS capabilities to obtain information from Cuba, and from Cuban exiles, were not fully utilized. The CIA JMWAVE Chief of Station in Florida was asked what his station's capability in this regard was:

Well, in relationship to Cubans living in the United States, I would say that our capability was quite good. Now if you are referring to our capability to conduct an investigation in Cuba, I would have to say it was limited.<sup>62</sup>

He summarized his station's participation in the investigation in the following testimony:

We felt that the nature of our capability was to simply respond to what we were able to obtain in the Miami area, and from our sources in a passive way, because this was an investigation that was being conducted in the United States with the primary responsibility with agencies other than CIA.

We had no reason at the particular time to feel that there was any kind of a case, hard information, that the Cubans were behind the assassination . . . . But we had no persuasion that this was being mounted by the Cubans at that particular time.<sup>63</sup>

Indeed all the evidence suggests that the CIA investigation into any Cuban connection, whether pro-Castro or anti-Castro, was passive in nature. The Special Affairs Staff did conduct name traces on the request of the CIA investigators. The JMWAVE station passed along any information its intelligence network collected on the assassination. SAS did interrogate one defector from Cuban intelligence about his

<sup>60</sup> Chief, SAS/CI testimony, 5/10/76, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Chief, SAS/CI testimony, 5/10/76, pp. 9-12.

<sup>62</sup> Chief, JMWAVE testimony, 5/6/76, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

knowledge of Cuban involvement, but there is no evidence that the CIA made any affirmative effort to collect such information. Indeed, AMLASHI himself had access to high government officials in Cuba. He was never asked about the assassination of President Kennedy in meetings with the CIA in 1964 and 1965.

Some CIA witnesses before the Select Committee have argued that an intensive investigation into Cuban involvement was not warranted by the facts known at the time, and in any event the FBI had primary responsibility for the investigation. Yet in view of Oswald's preoccupation with Cuba, and his visit to Mexico City ostensibly to obtain visas to Cuba and the Soviet Union, it would appear that potential involvement with pro-Castro or anti-Castro groups should have been investigated.

Even if CIA investigators did not know that the CIA was plotting to kill Castro, they certainly did know that the Agency had been operating a massive covert operation against Cuba since 1960. The conspiratorial atmosphere of violence which developed over the course of three years of CIA and exile group operations, should have led CIA investigators to ask whether Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby, who were known to have at least touched the fringes of the Cuban community were influenced by that atmosphere. Similarly that arguments that the CIA domestic jurisdiction was limited belie the fact CIA Cuban operations had created an enormous *domestic* apparatus, which the Agency used both to gather intelligence domestically and to run operations against Cuba.

CIA records relating to its investigation of President Kennedy's assassination, including documents acquired after issuance of the Warren Commission Report, are contained in approximately 57 file folders. The Select Committee staff has reviewed those records and taken testimony from key figures in the CIA investigation. All of the evidence reviewed by the Committee suggests that these investigators conducted a thorough, professional investigation and analysis of the information they had. So far as can be determined, the CIA furnished the Warren Commission directly, or through the FBI, all significant information CIA investigators had, except as otherwise noted in this report.

For example, one of the CIA mail surveillance operations did acquire at least some of Oswald's correspondence from the Soviet Union. Despite the fact that this operation was of the highest sensitivity at that time, the CIA did furnish the FBI with the information the Agency had acquired.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the CIA interrogated a former KGB officer who had access to Oswald's KGB dossier. Despite the extraordinary sensitivity of this defector, the CIA furnished the Warren Commission the details of his knowledge and an assessment of his reliability.

The CIA investigation of Cuban matters for the Warren Commission was not comparable to its effort in the Soviet area. The CIA staff for Cuban affairs was not in direct contact with the Warren Commis-

<sup>65</sup> CIA Letter to Rockefeller Commission, 5/7/75.

The Agency regularly supplied information gathered by this mail surveillance program to the Bureau. See the Select Committee staff report, "Domestic CIA and FBI Mail Opening."

sion, and the counterintelligence chief of that staff never met with the Commission or its staff.<sup>66</sup>

Apparently, neither the Warren Commission as a body nor its staff was given details of CIA Cuban operations. Although CIA manpower in Florida far surpassed the FBI, the Warren Commission and its staff relied completely on the FBI for reports about the Cuban exile community in Florida. Apparently, unaware of the fact that the CIA maintained a sizeable book on all Cuban exile organizations, their leadership, and activities, the Warren Commission asked the FBI to provide information on all such organizations. The Commission was informed by the FBI that the CIA could provide "pertinent information" on certain exile organizations, but there is no evidence that the Warren Commission either asked the CIA about that interest or pursued the matter in any way with the CIA.<sup>67</sup> There would seem to have been some obligation for the CIA to disclose the general nature of its operations which might affect the Commission's investigation.

In any event, the Warren Commission did not pursue with the CIA the questions of Oswald's pro-Castro and anti-Castro contacts. Of the thirty-four requests to the CIA from the Warren Commission on file at the Archives of the United States, fifteen deal with the Soviet Union or with Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union, but only one requests information on a Cuban matter. That is a request for the CIA to furnish information about Jack Ruby's alleged visit to Cuba in 1959.

### *C. Unpursued Leads*

In the course of its investigation, the Select Committee noted several instances where detailed knowledge of the intelligence agencies' operations with respect to Cuban matters would have been of assistance to the Warren Commission in its investigation. It is possible that the Warren Commission and its staff either received briefings on Cuban operations or were told informally about these operations. However, the Committee has necessarily relied on the documentary record to determine whether the Warren Commission or its staff was aware of specific details. The following discussion is based on a comparison of the documents located in CIA files with those in Warren Commission files.

Given the thorough investigation the CIA and the FBI conducted of most of the leads they received, their failure to follow significant leads in the Cuban area is surprising. These leads raise significant questions, and there is no evidence the Warren Commission staff was ever provided information which would have allowed it to pursue the leads.

On December 1, 1963, CIA received information that a November 22 Cubana airlines flight from Mexico City to Cuba was delayed some five hours, from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. E.S.T., awaiting an unidentified passenger.<sup>68</sup> This unidentified passenger arrived at the air-

<sup>66</sup> Chief, SAS/CI, 5/10/76, pp. 7, 8.

<sup>67</sup> The index of Warren Commission documents contain no such request.

<sup>68</sup> Cable from CIA Headquarters to Mexico Station, 12/1/63.

The CIA also received highly reliable information that many of the Cuban diplomatic personnel in Mexico City had gone to the airport at about this time on November 22. Again, there is no evidence CIA checked on this information.



port in a twin-engined aircraft at 10:30 p.m. and boarded the Cubana airlines plane without passing through customs, where he would have needed to identify himself by displaying a passport. The individual travelled to Cuba in the cockpit of the Cubana airlines plane, thus again avoiding identification by the passengers.<sup>69</sup>

In response to a Select Committee request of January 9, 1976, the CIA wrote it had no information indicating that a follow-up investigation was conducted to determine the identity of the passenger and had no further information on the passenger, and no explanation for why a follow-up investigation was not conducted.<sup>70</sup>

In early December 1963, even more intriguing information was received by the CIA, and passed almost immediately to FBI. In the case of the Cuban-American, a follow-up investigation was conducted. Although the information appeared to relate to the President's assassination and one source alleged the Cuban-American was "involved" in the assassination, the follow-up investigation was not conducted as part of the FBI's work for the Warren Commission.

The CIA learned that this Cuban-American crossed the border from Texas into Mexico on November 23,<sup>71</sup> and that the border had been closed by Mexican authorities immediately after the assassination and reopened on November 23.<sup>72</sup> The Cuban-American arrived in Mexico City on November 25. He stayed in a hotel until the evening of November 27, when he departed on a late evening regularly scheduled Cubana airlines flight to Havana, using a Cuban "courtesy visa" and an expired U.S. passport. He was the only passenger on that flight, which had a crew of nine.<sup>73</sup>

In March 1964, the CIA received a report from a source which alleged the Cuban-American had received his permit to enter Mexico on November 20 in Tampa, Florida.<sup>74</sup> The same source also said the Cuban-American was somehow "involved in the assassination."<sup>75</sup> There is no indication that CIA followed-up on this report, except to ask a Cuban defector about his knowledge of the Cuban-American's activities.<sup>76</sup>

The FBI did investigate this individual after receiving the CIA report of his unusual travel. However, by the time the Warren Report was published, the Cuban-American was still residing in Cuba and therefore outside FBI's jurisdiction. Before the FBI terminated the case, it had developed the following confusing and incomplete information.

The Cuban-American applied for a U.S. passport at the U.S. Consul Office in Havana in June 1960.<sup>77</sup> In July 1960, he was issued a passport, but it was only valid until January 1963, when he would become 23 years old.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>69</sup> CIA cable from Headquarters to Mexico Station, 12/1/63.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from CIA to Select Committee, 2/4/76.

<sup>71</sup> CIA cable from Mexico Station to Headquarters, 12/3/63.

<sup>72</sup> CIA cable from Mexico Station to Headquarters, 12/3/63.

<sup>73</sup> CIA cable from Mexico Station to Headquarters, 12/5/63.

<sup>74</sup> CIA cable from Mexico Station to Headquarters, 3/19/64.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Memorandum from CIA analyst to Helms, 5/11/64, attachment.

<sup>77</sup> Memorandum from Washington Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 12/9/63.

<sup>78</sup> Memorandum from Washington Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 12/9/63.

In May 1962 the Cuban-American requested that Cuban authorities permit him to return to Cuba.<sup>80</sup> The Cuban-American's cousin said the Cuban-American apparently did travel to Cuba sometime after May 1962, and spent several weeks there.<sup>81</sup> In August 1962, the Cuban-American married an American woman. They lived in Key West until June 1963, when they moved to Tampa. In August 1963, his wife moved back to Key West because of marital problems. His wife and others characterized the Cuban-American as pro-Castro.<sup>82</sup>

The Cuban-American allegedly told FBI sources that he had originally left Cuba to evade Cuban military service. Nevertheless, some sources told the FBI that the Cuban-American had returned to Cuba in 1963 because he feared being drafted in the United States, while others attributed his return to his worry about his parents or about his own health.<sup>83</sup>

It was also reported to the FBI that the Cuban-American had a brother in the Cuban military who was studying in the Soviet Union.<sup>84</sup>

On November 17, 1963, according to several sources, the Cuban-American was at a get-together at the home of a member of the Tampa Chapter of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, where color slides of Cuba were shown.

There was some talk about the Cuban-American having been at the residence for some time waiting for a telephone call from Cuba which was very important. It was understood that it all depended on his getting the "go ahead order" for him to leave the United States. He indicated he had been refused travel back to his native Cuba . . . .<sup>85</sup>

On November 20, 1963, the Cuban-American obtained a Mexican tourist card at the Honorary Consulate of Mexico in Tampa and on November 23 crossed the border into Mexico at Nuevo Laredo.<sup>86</sup> Since the Cuban-American was apparently not listed as the driver of any vehicle crossing the border that day, the FBI concluded he crossed in a privately owned automobile owned by another person.<sup>87</sup>

At a regular monthly meeting of the Tampa FPCC in December 1963, a woman told the group that she had telephoned Cuba at 5:00 a.m. and was informed that the Cuban-American had arrived there safely via Texas and Mexico.<sup>88</sup> Another source reported that as of September 1964, the Cuban-American was not working in Cuba but spent a great deal of time playing dominoes.<sup>89</sup>

The preceding was the extent of the FBI and the CIA investigation.<sup>90</sup> So far as can be determined, neither the FBI nor the CIA told

<sup>80</sup> Memorandum from FBI Headquarters to Miami Field Office, 6/7/62.

<sup>81</sup> Memorandum from Tampa Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 8/26/64.

<sup>82</sup> Memorandum from Tampa Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 6/3/64.

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum from Tampa Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 6/3/64.

<sup>84</sup> Memorandum from Tampa Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 3/31/64.

<sup>85</sup> Memorandum from Tampa Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 3/31/64. President Kennedy made several public appearances in Tampa on November 18.

<sup>86</sup> Memorandum from Mexico Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 12/5/63.

<sup>87</sup> Memorandum from FBI Headquarters to Mexico Field Office, 11/31/64.

<sup>88</sup> Memorandum from Tampa Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 3/31/64.

<sup>89</sup> Memorandum from Tampa Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 10/26/64.

<sup>90</sup> A CIA employee did check the U.S. Passport Office's file on this individual in early December 1963, after the Mexico Station cabled a request for a check. In May 1964, a defector from Cuban intelligence was asked if he knew anything about this individual and he responded in the negative.

the Warren Commission about the Cuban-American's strange travel. Warren Commission files contain an excerpt of the FBI check on the Cuban-American at the Passport Office, but nothing else. In responding to the Commission's request for information on the Miami chapter of the FPCC, FBI reported that the Tampa chapter had 16 members in 1961 and was active in May 1963. The FBI response did not discuss the Cuban-American or the November and December 1963 meetings.<sup>91</sup>

Moreover, a possible connection between Oswald and the Tampa chapter of FPCC had already been indicated. Oswald applied to V. T. Lee, national president of the FPCC, for a charter for a New Orleans chapter. Lee wrote Oswald on May 29, 1963, suggesting Oswald get in touch with the Tampa chapter, which Lee had personally organized.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the suspicious travel of this individual coupled with the possibility that Oswald had contacted the Tampa chapter certainly should have prompted a far more thorough and timely investigation than the FBI conducted and the results should have been volunteered to the Warren Commission, regardless of its failure to request such information.

In the two preceding cases the Warren Commission staff was apparently not furnished with what now seems to be significant information relating to possible Cuban involvement. In other instances, the Warren Commission staff levied requirements on the FBI for information on pro-Castro and anti-Castro groups, apparently unaware that other agencies could make a significant contribution to the Commission's work.

On March 26, 1964, J. Lee Rankin, the General Counsel of the Warren Commission, wrote Director Hoover requesting the FBI to furnish the Commission with information on certain pro-Castro and anti-Castro organizations which were then active in the United States.<sup>93</sup> In a letter of May 20, 1964, Rankin again wrote Hoover:

As a result of my letter of March 26, 1964, with respect to background materials on the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and certain other subversive groups, it was agreed that your Agency would await further instructions from this Commission.

The Commission would now appreciate your providing the following information on the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, "JURE," "DRE," Alpha 66, and 30th of November Movement.<sup>94</sup>

Rankin's letter went on to detail the nature of the requested information:

1. all reports from Dallas and Fort Worth in 1963 on active members of the groups;
2. summaries of the groups' activities in Texas in 1963; and
3. a general summary of the activities of such groups outside Texas in 1963 with particular reference to activities in certain parts of the country.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Rankin, 6/11/64.

<sup>92</sup> Warren Commission Report, Vol. XX, pp. 514-516.

<sup>93</sup> Memorandum from Rankin to Hoover, 3/26/64.

<sup>94</sup> Memorandum from Rankin to Hoover, 5/20/64.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

FBI Director Hoover responded to this request on June 11, 1964. Enclosed with this letter were 15 reports on named individuals and 46 memoranda on the identified organizations.<sup>96</sup> All 46 memoranda were prepared by FBI field offices in various cities and all were dated after May 20, 1964.<sup>97</sup> In other words, it appears that FBI Headquarters simply directed its *field offices* in identified cities to prepare the responses. The individual responsible for preparing this response at FBI Headquarters has not been questioned by the Select Committee on this matter. However his superior was asked whether he thought the FBI response provided a fair and accurate picture of the information FBI held on these groups.

Q. Would you have received that correspondence [of June 11, 1964] and be asked whether it was an accurate or fair portrayal of these [Cuban] groups?

A. No, because this correspondence would have been the results of investigations we had conducted, regularly submitted by investigative reports or by letterhead memos, and there would be no need for me to review that and say this was a fair portrayal of the investigation.<sup>98</sup>

In addition, Hoover's letter directed the Commission's attention to the fact that the CIA and the Department of the Army "may have pertinent information concerning these organizations."<sup>99</sup> On the copy of the letter not provided the Warren Commission, but kept in FBI files, there is a note which states that the CIA and the Department of the Army in fact had "operational interests" in identified organizations and certain individuals involved with these groups.<sup>100</sup> This FBI letter alerted the Warren Commission to the fact that the Army and CIA might provide "pertinent information" on these groups and individuals, but it did not disclose the fact that those other two agencies actually had an "operational interest," *e.g.*, that those agencies might be using the groups or individuals for intelligence collection or in covert operations. The Select Committee was unable to locate any documentary evidence that the Commission pursued this matter with either the CIA or the Army.

At this time the CIA was in fact funding and sponsoring the activities of several anti-Castro groups.<sup>101</sup> Although most CIA contacts with these groups in the Fall of 1963 were for gathering intelligence and issuing propaganda, paramilitary operations of these groups may have received Agency support.

The Department of the Army was in contact with the members and leadership on one group. Apparently, the Army attempted to use individuals associated with the group to collect intelligence on Cuba.<sup>102</sup>

Whether pursuing these connections to the CIA and the Army would have affected the Warren Commission's investigation is difficult to

<sup>96</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Rankin, 6/11/64, with attachment.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> Section Chief, 5/11/76, p. 45.

<sup>99</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Rankin, 6/11/64, with attachment.

<sup>100</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Rankin, 6/11/64.

<sup>101</sup> Memorandum from Hoover to Rankin, 6/11/64.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from Department of Defense to Select Committee, 4/30/76.

determine. The Warren Commission might have asked the Army and the CIA to use their sources in these groups to obtain additional information on the groups' activities. More importantly, such information might have given the Warren Commission a better understanding of the background of the individuals it was investigating. For example, one Cuban in the Dallas area was investigated by the FBI at the request of the Warren Commission, because he was alleged to be an agent of the Cuban government.<sup>103</sup> The FBI agent who interviewed the individual was apparently unaware that this Cuban exile was an approved, though unused, source of Army intelligence in 1963 in an operation centered in the Miami area and that he had been used as a source in 1962 in Miami.<sup>104</sup>

The FBI reports on Alpha 66 furnished the Commission did note that Alpha 66 was responsible for an attack on a Soviet vessel in March 1963,<sup>105</sup> but did not detail the fact that it had continued planning paramilitary operations against Cuba.<sup>106</sup> These reports did not include information, scattered through several other FBI reports, that Alpha 66 had held discussions with other anti-Castro groups in an attempt to unite their efforts.<sup>107</sup> The FBI reports did not include the fact that the Alpha 66's leaders in September 1963 had been negotiating for the use of aircraft with which to conduct raids against Cuba, with those involved in a New Orleans anti-Castro training camp.<sup>108</sup>

Although the FBI informed the Warren Commission that the CIA and the Army had "pertinent information" on some of these groups, the Select Committee has been unable to find any evidence to indicate that the FBI itself contacted these other agencies. The Select Committee has been unable to find evidence that either the CIA or the Army independently contacted their sources in these groups to determine what they might be able to contribute to the investigation.

The CIA also took an interest in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee with which Oswald was associated. According to the FBI documents, on September 16, 1963, the CIA advised the FBI that the "Agency is giving some consideration to countering the activities of [the FPCC] in foreign countries."<sup>109</sup> The memorandum continued:

CIA is also giving some thought to planting deceptive information which might embarrass the Committee in areas where it does have some support.

Pursuant to a discussion with the Liaison Agent, [a middle level CIA official working on anti-Castro propaganda] advised that his Agency will not take action without first consulting with the Bureau, bearing in mind that we wish to make certain the CIA activity will not jeopardize any Bureau investigation.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Memorandum from Dallas Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 6/14/63.

<sup>104</sup> Army Intelligence Dossier.

<sup>105</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 6/3/64.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Memorandum from FBI liaison to Liaison Section Chief, 9/18/63.

<sup>110</sup> Memorandum from FBI liaison to Liaison Section Chief, 9/18/63.

The CIA specifically wanted the FPCC's foreign mailing list and other documents.<sup>111</sup> On September 26, 1963, FBI Headquarters wrote its New York office about the proposed CIA operation, concluding:

New York should promptly advise whether the material requested by CIA is available or obtainable, bearing in mind the confidential nature and purpose of CIA's request. If available, it should be furnished by cover letter with enclosures suitable for dissemination to CIA by liaison.<sup>112</sup>

At the bottom of the Headquarters copy of this directive is the note:

We have in the past utilized techniques with respect to countering activities of mentioned organization in the U.S. During December 1961, New York prepared an anonymous leaflet which was mailed to selected FPCC members throughout the country for purpose of disrupting FPCC and causing split between FPCC and its Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supporters, which technique was very effective. Also during May 1961, a field survey was completed wherein available public source data of adverse nature regarding officers and leaders of FPCC was compiled and furnished Mr. DeLoach for use in contacting his sources.

It is noted, with respect to present status of FPCC during July and August, 1963, several New York sources reported FPCC was "on the ropes for lack of funds" and in danger of being taken over by Progressive Labor members.<sup>113</sup>

By Airtel of October 4, 1963, the New York office responded to the Headquarters directive saying: "The NYO plans to contact an (informant) on about 10/27/63 and it is believed possible that this source will be able to furnish both of the above mentioned items."<sup>114</sup>

By Airtel of October 28, 1963, the New York Office reported to Headquarters:

"On 10/27/63, [the informant] was contacted by agents of the New York office. This source furnished approximately 100 photographs of data pertaining to the current finances and general activities of the FPCC. In addition, the source furnished other documents and information regarding the FPCC mailing list. After processing the photographs, prompt dissemination will be affected and the material of interest to CIA per referenced Bureau letter will be immediately forwarded to the Bureau."

The FBI documents indicate processing of the 100 photographs was not completed before the assassination. The New York office began an expedited review of the material so obtained on the afternoon of the assassination to determine whether it contained anything about Oswald. This was mentioned in a November 23 memorandum to William Sullivan.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Memorandum from FBI Headquarters to New York Field Office, 9/26/63.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Memorandum from New York Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 10/4/63.

That memorandum also reported the New York office's expedited review uncovered a letter Oswald had written Ted Lee about Oswald's FPCC activities in New Orleans.<sup>115</sup>

By letter of November 27, the New York office wrote Headquarters:

On 10/27/63, [the informant] furnished the above material to agents of the NYO. Enclosed for Bureau are suitable for dissemination, dated and captioned as above, containing information furnished by [informant].<sup>116</sup>

Enclosed with this letter was a copy of "the foreign mailing list of FPCC as of October 1963."<sup>117</sup>

It should be noted that there is no reason to believe that any of this FBI or CIA activity had any direct connection with Oswald. The CIA could not have received the information it requested the FBI to obtain until after the assassination, so there is no reason to think the CIA propaganda program was underway before the assassination. Although the FBI liaison was told by the CIA that any action the CIA took against the FPCC would be cleared first with FBI,<sup>118</sup> Bureau documents do not indicate any request for such clearance.

#### *D. Knowledge of Plots to Assassinate Castro*

The Warren Commission was concerned with the general subject of political assassination. For example, the Commission requested information from the State Department<sup>119</sup> on alleged attempts at political assassination in other countries. However, none of these requests involved the plots conceived by the CIA: and the Warren Commission did not ask if the United States government had sponsored assassination attempts.

With the exception of Allen Dulles, it is unlikely that anyone on the Warren Commission knew of CIA assassination efforts. Former Senator John Sherman Cooper, a member of the Commission, advised the Select Committee that the subject never came up in the Commission's deliberations.<sup>120</sup> Lee Rankin, Chief Counsel for the Warren

<sup>115</sup> Memorandum from New York Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 10/28/63. A copy of what probably is the same letter was turned over to the Warren Commission by Ted Lee. Warren Commission files at the Archives contained information that may have come from these photographs of documents. However, Warren Commission files contain no reference to any CIA interest in FPCC or to the FBI operation which yielded the mailing list.

<sup>116</sup> Memorandum from New York Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 11/27/63, w/attachment.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Memorandum from FBI liaison to Liaison Section Chief, 9/18/63.

<sup>119</sup> State Department Information Report 2/1/55, re: Assassination of President Remon of Panama, Commission Document #279; State Department Information Report, 5/10/57, re: Attempted Assassination of Vice President Chang Myon, Republic of Korea, Commission Document #280; State Department Information Report, 5/24/62, re: Attempted Assassination of President Sukarno, Indonesia, Commission Document #283; State Department Information Report, 6/14/62, re: Attempted Assassination of President Sukarno, Indonesia, Commission Document #284; State Department Information Report, 9/27/62, re: Attempted Assassination of President deGaulle, Commission Document #285; State Department Information Report, 1/25/63, re: President Olympio, Togo, Commission Document #286.

<sup>120</sup> Staff discussion with Ambassador John Sherman Cooper, 5/24/76.

Commission, and Burt Griffin, Howard Willens, and David Belin of the Commission staff have all stated they were not aware of the CIA plots.<sup>121</sup>

Many government officials, however, were aware that the CIA used the underworld in attempts to assassinate Castro. Attorney General Kennedy had been informed of these plots,<sup>122</sup> and FBI Director Hoover knew there had been such operations.<sup>123</sup> Allen Dulles, who had been Director of Central Intelligence until November 1961, was a member of the Warren Commission, and knew of the CIA plots with underworld figures which had taken place during his tenure at the Agency.<sup>124</sup> Since CIA, FBI, and Justice Department files all contained information about these plots with the underworld, any number of government officials may have known that the CIA had attempted to assassinate Castro.

Nevertheless, it might have appeared to these government officials that there was no clear reason to connect these underworld plots to the President's assassination. Most government officials who were aware of them probably assumed they had ended in 1962. Since that time, the Cuban missile crisis had occurred and U.S.-Cuban hostility had cooled. Officials at both the CIA and the FBI were aware that William Harvey had told his underworld contacts in early 1963 that the CIA was no longer interested in Castro's assassination.<sup>125</sup> So these unsuccessful plots were officially terminated well before President Kennedy's assassination.

Moreover, Fidel Castro probably would not have been certain that the CIA was behind the underworld attempts. Elements of the underworld and of the Cuban exile community which were not affiliated in any way with CIA were also interested in assassinating Castro. It is unlikely that Castro could have distinguished the CIA plots with the underworld from those plots not backed by the CIA. In fact, the methods the CIA used in these attempts were designed to prevent the Cuban government from attributing them to the CIA.<sup>126</sup>

The AMLASH operation was clearly different. CIA case officers, not underworld figures, were in direct contact with AMLASH and told him they were with the CIA. Upon meeting AMLASH, Mr. Fitzgerald, a senior CIA official, told him that he was the personal representative of Attorney General Robert Kennedy.<sup>127</sup> Fitzgerald and the case officer assured AMLASH that his proposed coup had the support of the United States government.<sup>128</sup> Thus, if anyone learned of the operation, he would have known that the CIA was clearly responsible for it.

In addition, the AMLASH operation was underway at the time of the President's assassination. While the assassination plots against Castro, which involved the underworld, may not have been considered

<sup>121</sup> Letter from Burt Griffin to David Belin, 4/7/75, p. 3; staff interview with Howard Willens, 5/12/76; memorandum from Belin to the Rockefeller Commission 5/20/75, p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> Assassination Report, pp. 130-131.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Assassination Report, pp. 91-92.

<sup>125</sup> Memorandum of FBI liaison to CIA, 6/20/63.

<sup>126</sup> 1967 I.G. Report, p. 55.

<sup>127</sup> 1967 I.G. Report, pp. 88-91.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*



relevant to the President's assassination, the AMLASH operation had particular significance.

Very few individuals in the United States government knew of the AMLASH plot. Mr. McCone, who was then Director of Central Intelligence, testified he did not know of the AMLASH operation.

Q. Were you aware of any effort to assassinate Mr. Castro through an agent known as AMLASH?

A. No.

Q. I would like to draw your attention to [the fact that] at the very moment President Kennedy was shot, a CIA officer was meeting with a Cuban agent . . . and offering him an assassination device for use against Castro.

I take it you didn't hear anything about that operation?

A. [Indicates "No"].<sup>129</sup>

Mr. Helms, who was Deputy Director for Plans, knew of the operation, although he would not characterize the operation as an assassination plot.<sup>130</sup> The case officer, who met with AMLASH on November 22, similarly rejected such a characterization.<sup>131</sup>

Several individuals on the CIA Special Affairs Staff knew of the operation, but they were not in direct contact with the Warren Commission. Desmond Fitzgerald, Chief of SAS, knew of the operation, as did his executive officer who has testified that he regarded it as an assassination plot.<sup>132</sup> The Chief of SAS Counterintelligence also knew of the operation, and testified that he regarded it as an assassination plot.<sup>133</sup> Others within the SAS who had access to the AMLASH file obviously knew about the operation but, since there is no record of the poison pen in that file, they may not have known that key fact. Those CIA technicians who fabricated the pen would have been aware of its existence, but probably would not have known anything else about the operation.

James Angleton, whose Counterintelligence Division conducted CIA research for the Warren Commission, has testified that he was not aware of the AMLASH operation, although he did suggest that he had reason to suspect there was something to Harvey's meetings with "underworld figures."<sup>134</sup> His assistant, who was made "point of record" for the Warren Commission, has stated he did not know of any assassination plots against Castro.<sup>135</sup> In 1975, after being questioned

<sup>129</sup> John McCone testimony, 6/6/75, p. 59; Assassination Report, pp. 99-100.

<sup>130</sup> Helms' testimony, 6/13/75, pp. 123, 135; See Assassination Report, pp. 174-176, for further discussion.

<sup>131</sup> Case Officer testimony, 2/11/76, p. 22.

<sup>132</sup> Executive Officer testimony, 4/22/76, p. 15.

<sup>133</sup> Chief, SAS/CI testimony, 5/10/76, p. 24.

<sup>134</sup> Angleton testimony, 2/6/76, pp. 31-34. It is important to note that Mr. Angleton testified he was often in contact with Dulles after the latter had left the Agency. Angleton testified that Dulles consulted with him before agreeing to President Johnson's request that he be on the Commission and that he was in frequent contact with Dulles. Angleton has also indicated that he and Dulles informally discussed the progress of the Commission's investigation and that Dulles consulted with him about what further investigation the CIA could do. So if Dulles relied solely on Angleton to discretely check matters, which Dulles did not feel the entire Commission should know about, he would not have learned of the AMLASH operation.

<sup>135</sup> Staff interview of CIA analyst, 3/15/76.

by the Rockefeller Commission on this point, he noted knowledge of an ongoing assassination plot might have changed his thinking about Oswald's Mexican trip.<sup>136</sup>

Thomas Karamessines, who had some contact with the Commission, has testified that he was unaware of the CIA assassination plots.<sup>137</sup>

Thus, according to the testimony, Mr. Helms was the only CIA official who was both in contact with the Warren Commission and knowledgeable of the AMLASH operation. On several occasions Mr. Helms has been questioned about whether he informed the Warren Commission of the CIA assassination plots.

CHAIRMAN CHURCH: Since you had knowledge of the CIA involvement in these assassination plots against Castro [from the context the question is not specifically focused on the AMLASH plot], and knew it at the time . . . I would have thought . . . that ought to have been related to the Commission, because it does bear on the motives whatever else.

MR. HELMS: . . . Mr. Allen Dulles was a member of the Warren Commission. And the first assassination plot happened during his time as director. What he said to the Warren Commission about this . . . I don't know. But at least he was sitting right there in [the Commission's] deliberations and knew about this, and I am sure that the same thought that occurred to you must have occurred to him.<sup>138</sup>

SENATOR MORGAN: . . . [in 1963] you were not . . . just an employee of the CIA. You were in the top echelon, the management level, were you not?

MR. HELMS: Yes, I was Senator Morgan. . . .

SENATOR MORGAN: . . . you had been part of an assassination plot against Castro?

MR. HELMS: I was aware that there had been efforts made to get rid of him by these means.

SENATOR MORGAN: . . . you were charged with furnishing the Warren Commission information from the CIA, information that you thought was relevant?

MR. HELM: No sir, I was instructed to reply to inquiries from the Warren Commission for information from the Agency. I was not asked to initiate any particular thing.

SENATOR MORGAN: . . . in other words if you weren't asked for it, you didn't give it.

MR. HELMS: That's right, sir.<sup>139</sup>

Mr. Helms also stated that he thought the Warren Commission could have relied on public knowledge that the United States wanted "to get rid of Castro."

I don't recall that I was either instructed or it occurred to me to cover with the Warren Commission the precise details of the Agency's operations not because I made a significant

<sup>136</sup> Memorandum from CIA analyst, 4/2/75.

<sup>137</sup> Karamessines, 4/18/76, p. 32.

<sup>138</sup> Helms testimony, 7/18/75, pp. 36-37.

<sup>139</sup> Helms testimony, 7/17/75, pp. 118-119.

judgment not to do this, but . . . my recollection at the time was that it was public knowledge that the United States was trying to get rid of Castro.<sup>140</sup>

In testimony before the Rockefeller Commission, Mr. Helms was directly asked whether he linked Oswald's pro-Cuban activity with the possibility that Castro had retaliated for CIA attempts against him.

Q. Now, after President Kennedy was assassinated in November 1963, and after it became known to you that the individual, Lee Harvey Oswald, was believed very broadly to have done the shooting, that Oswald had had some activity in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee . . . did you hold any conversations with anybody about the possibility that the assassination of President Kennedy was a retaliation by Oswald against the activity, the talks and plans to assassinate Castro?

A. No. I don't recall discussing that with anybody. I don't recall the thought ever having occurred to me at the time. The first time I ever heard such a theory as that enunciated was in a very peculiar way by President Johnson. . . .

Q. I am not asking you about a story, Ambassador, I am asking you whether or not there was a relationship between Oswald's contacts with the Cuban's, and his support for the Castro government, his attempts in September 1963 to get a passport to Cuba, to travel to Cuba, his attempts to penetrate anti-Castro groups. Did this connection ever enter your mind?

A. I don't recall its having done so.<sup>141</sup>

Mr. Helms also testified he did not believe the AMLASH operation was relevant to the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination.<sup>142</sup>

The testimony of the AMLASH Case Officer is similar. He stated, "I find it very difficult to link the AMLASH operation to the assassination. I find no way to link it. I did not know of any other CIA assassination attempts against Fidel Castro, so I have nothing to link."<sup>143</sup>

Director Hoover knew of CIA effort to assassinate Castro using underworld contacts. While Hoover may have assumed that those plots terminated in 1962, in June 1963, the FBI learned that William Harvey had told his underworld contacts that the CIA was no longer interested in assassinating Castro. In October 1963, an informant reported to the FBI that the CIA had recently been meeting with a Cuban official (AMLASH), but there is no evidence the FBI then had actual knowledge of the assassination aspect of the operation involving the Cuban.<sup>144</sup>

After receiving a report of an assassination plot against Castro in January 1964, the FBI liaison to the CIA checked to see if the CIA was involved in the plot.<sup>145</sup> According to a memorandum prepared by

<sup>140</sup> Helms testimony, 6/13/75, p. 82.

<sup>141</sup> Richard Helms testimony, Rockefeller Commission, 4/24/75, pp. 389-391.

<sup>142</sup> Helms testimony, Rockefeller Commission, 4/24/75, pp. 389-391-2.

<sup>143</sup> Case Officer testimony, 7/29/75, p. 116.

<sup>144</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 10/10/63.

The FBI knew the true name of the Cuban official, but was unaware that he had been code-named.

<sup>145</sup> Memorandum from FBI liaison, 1/24/64.

the FBI liaison: "The Agency currently is not involved in any activity which includes plans to assassinate Castro."<sup>146</sup> This memorandum was distributed to two Section Chiefs, and to the Bureau supervisor responsible for anti-Castro activities. In February, this information was passed to at least one field office.

In late July 1964, an FBI informant again reported that the CIA had meetings with the Cuban official (AMLAASH). This report indicates that the purpose of those meetings had been to plan the assassination of Castro.<sup>147</sup> The informant reported that the Cuban official had been unhappy with the CIA response and that Attorney General Kennedy had refused to support the plan.<sup>148</sup> He also reported that the plan had not been completely put to rest.<sup>149</sup> Because the informant requested that the Bureau not inform the CIA or the White House about this report, it was not disseminated outside the FBI. Headquarters advised the field office in contact with the informant, to keep them advised.<sup>150</sup> The FBI supervisor involved noted on his copy of the communication to the field office, that the Bureau, acting on orders from the Attorney General, was investigating a reported underworld plot against Castro, and that this might be the same as the alleged plot involving the Cuban (AMLAASH).

In hindsight, the AMLASH operation seems very relevant to the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination. It is difficult to understand why those aware of the operation did not think it relevant, and did not inform those investigating President Kennedy's assassination of possible connections between that operation and the assassination.

The Desk Officer who was in charge of the initial CIA investigation of President Kennedy's assassination, first learned of the AMLASH operation when he testified before the Select Committee:

Q. Did you know that on November 22, 1963, about the time Kennedy was assassinated, a CIA case officer was passing a poison pen, offering a poison pen to a high level Cuban to use to assassinate Castro?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Would you have drawn a link in your mind between that and the Kennedy assassination?

A. I certainly think that that would have been—become an absolutely vital factor in analyzing the events surrounding the Kennedy assassination.<sup>151</sup>

Several Warren Commission staff members have also stated that a connection between CIA assassination operations and President Kennedy's assassination should have been investigated. For example,

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarter, 7/29/64.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> Memorandum from FBI Headquarters to Miami Field Office, 8/8/63.

<sup>151</sup> Desk Officer, 5/7/76, pp. 31, 32.

Mr. Belin, Executive Director of the Rockefeller Commission and Counsel to the Warren Commission wrote:

At no time did the CIA disclose to the Warren Commission any facts which pertained to alleged assassination plans to kill Fidel Castro . . . .

The CIA withheld from the Warren Commission information which might have been relevant . . . in light of the allegations of conspiratorial contact between Oswald and agents of the Cuban government.<sup>152</sup>

Another former Warren Commission staff counsel, Judge Burt Griffin, expressed his views on the matter. Judge Griffin wrote Belin expressing his opinion that assassination plots against Castro might have a significant effect on the Warren Commission findings:

As you can see, my questions are prompted by two underlying theories: First, if Castro or Castro sympathizers, feared a U.S. fostered effort on his life, it is likely that they might have tried to assassinate Kennedy first. Second, if the CIA suspected that pro-Castro individuals, in addition to Oswald, were behind the assassination of John F. Kennedy, they would have considered retaliation against Castro. Those theories lead not only to the issue of possible conspirators with Oswald, but also his motive.<sup>153</sup>

The Chief of SAS Counterintelligence was asked whether it was reasonable to make a connection between AMLASH and President Kennedy's assassination:

Q. Would you quarrel with individuals who had the same knowledge you did—and who have testified that they did not draw such a connection?

A. That they did not draw a connection?

Q. Yes.

A. I couldn't quarrel with them, no.

Q. In other words, you think knowledgeable officials, knowledgeable of both the Kennedy assassination investigation and of the AMLASH operation. . . .

A. I think it would have been logical for them to consider that there could be a connection and to have explored it on their own.<sup>154</sup>

The CIA Inspector General seemed to make a connection. Desmond Fitzgerald's Executive Officer testified about being interviewed in 1967 by the Inspector General:

Q. Did [member of Inspector General's staff] ask you about any connections between the Kennedy assassination and CIA plots against Castro?

A. No. The only comment I think he made was something to the effect that it was strange and ironic that the day

<sup>152</sup> Memorandum from David Belin to the Rockefeller Commission, May 20, 1975, p. 1.

<sup>153</sup> Letter from Burt Griffin to David Belin, 4/7/75, p. 3.

<sup>154</sup> Chief SAS/CI testimony, 5/10/76, p. 21.

Kennedy died the case officer was trying to give AMLASH a poison pen. That is the only connection that I remember.<sup>155</sup>

Finally, the CIA analyst, who was the "point of record" coordinating the CIA research for the Warren Commission, prepared a memorandum stating he was unaware of the plots until 1975, and expressing concern about the Warren Commission's findings in light of this new information.<sup>156</sup>

The conduct of the AMLASH operation during the fall of 1963, should have raised major concerns within the CIA about its possible connection with the Kennedy assassination. The Chief of SAS Counterintelligence has testified he was always concerned about the operation's security.<sup>157</sup> Indeed, various reports received by the CIA during the fall of 1963 contained information which should have raised questions about the operation's security. In 1965, when CIA ties to the Cubans involved in the AMLASH operation were severed, the Chief of SAS Counterintelligence pointed out the security problems in the operation.<sup>158</sup>

Among other things noted in that memorandum is the possibility that AMLASH had been a provocation, i.e., an agent sent by Cuban intelligence to provoke a certain reaction from the CIA.<sup>159</sup>

Until Select Committee staff informed officials at the CIA, the Agency was unaware that in October 1963 the FBI had received a report that the CIA was meeting with AMLASH.<sup>160</sup> That report contained information which indicates that the FBI informant knew the date and location of one of the meetings.<sup>161</sup> In July 1964, the informant gave the FBI additional details about the AMLASH operation, including the fact that the operation had involved assassination plotting.<sup>162</sup> Thus, an operation the CIA felt to be extraordinarily sensitive, perhaps so sensitive that its existence could not be disclosed to the Warren Commission, was known to at least one FBI informant in the United States.

Finally, the operation should have been of concern because Desmond Fitzgerald had personally met with AMLASH. The Chief of the CIA JMWAVE station testified that Fitzgerald had asked him if he should meet with AMLASH. The Chief told Fitzgerald that he should not meet AMLASH because such a meeting could prove very embarrassing for the CIA, if AMLASH was working for Cuban intelligence.

My recollection of this AMLASH case is as follows. At some point in time, I had a conversation with Desmond Fitzgerald in Washington during one of my periodic visits to

<sup>155</sup> Executive Officer, 4/22/76, p. 44.

<sup>156</sup> Memorandum for the record from CIA analyst, 4/1/75.

<sup>157</sup> Chief, SAS/CI testimony, 5/10/76, pp. 23-24.

<sup>158</sup> Undated memorandum from Chief, SAS/CI to Chief, WHD Cuba.

<sup>159</sup> Undated memorandum from Chief, SAS/CI to Chief, WHD Cuba.

<sup>160</sup> In 1965 the FBI did pass to CIA information that they received from "A" that he was aware of the AMLASH operation. They offered the CIA the opportunity to interrogate "A", but the FBI did not pass to the CIA information reviewed in October 1963.

<sup>161</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 10/10/63.

<sup>162</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 7/29/64.

Washington from Miami. We discussed at that meeting the nature of our approach to the military establishment in Cuba.

In the context of that conversation, Mr. Fitzgerald asked me if whether I thought it would be a good idea for him to meet one of these Cuban military personalities, and he subsequently identified to me the personality he was talking about was AMLASH. My advice to him was that it would probably not be a good idea for him to meet him, and the only thing that I could see coming out of that kind of contact would be . . . a personal feel for what makes some of these people tick, in human terms, and that that was too high a price to pay for the prospect if anything went wrong. . . .<sup>163</sup>

The Chief SAS/Counterintelligence had similar reservations. When questioned about the security of the AMLASH operation, he testified:

Q. Did you know back in November 1963 that the CIA was meeting with AMLASH?

A. Yes, and I had expressed my reservations about such a meeting. I didn't consider him to be responsible.

Q. Did you know that Mr. Fitzgerald met with AMLASH in late October of 1963?

A. I believe I did. I have vague recollections of that now, yes.

Q. What was the purpose of that meeting?

A. I believe this was related to the assassination, an assassination plot against Castro, and as to this I had reference before. I couldn't recall the exact time frame, but I thought it was nonsense. I thought it would be counterproductive if it had been successful, so I opposed it.

Q. Did you know that Mr. Fitzgerald went ahead with it?

A. Yes. Mr. Fitzgerald and I did not always agree.

Q. But he told you he was going ahead with the operation?

A. I expressed my reservations about it. He went ahead. He didn't ask my permission. He was my boss.<sup>164</sup>

Thus, information on the AMLASH operation, an operation which those who investigated the assassination of President Kennedy now believe would have been relevant to their inquiries, was not supplied to either the Warren Commission or the FBI. Even the CIA personnel responsible for investigating the assassination were not informed of the operation.

<sup>163</sup> Chief, JMWAVE, testimony 8/19/75, pp. 79-80.

<sup>164</sup> Chief, SAS/CI, 5/10/76, pp. 20, 21.

