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The United States Senate

Report of Proceedings

3/17/77
EG

Hearing held before

Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities

Monday, May 10, 1976

Washington, D.C.

(Stenotype Tape and Waste turned over to the Committee for destruction)

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TOP SECRET

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- - -

Monday, May 10, 1976

- - -

United States Senate,
Select Committee to Study Governmental
Operations with Respect to
Intelligence Activities,
Washington, D. C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:18 o'clock a.m., in Room 608, The Carroll Arms Hotel, the Honorable Richard S. Schweiker presiding.

Present: Senator Schweiker (presiding).

Also present: Jim Johnston, Michael Epstein and Paul Wallach, Professional Staff Members.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

Senator Schweiker. All right, Mr. Swenson, we swear in all of our witnesses, if you would rise and raise your right hand, please.

Do you solemnly swear the testimony you're about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. Swenson. I do.

Senator Schweiker. Be seated.

Mr. Johnston. Mr. Swenson, would you state your name and address?

TESTIMONY OF HAROLD SWENSON

ACCOMPANIED BY ROBERT D. PELOQUIN

Mr. Swenson. Harold Swenson. My home address is [redacted]

Mr. Johnston. And you are accompanied by counsel this morning, is that correct?

Mr. Swenson. That's correct.

Mr. Johnston. I would ask counsel to identify himself for the record.

Mr. Peloquin. Robert D. Peloquin, 1707 H Street, N.W.

Mr. Johnston. Let me state for the record that I called [redacted] at the Agency this morning and stated that you were going to represent Mr. Swenson, and he stated that that was acceptable to the Agency.

Mr. Peloquin. I am proud to hear that.

Mr. Johnston. Mr. Swenson, you are appearing here voluntarily today. Do you understand that you have all of your constitutional rights before this Committee?

Mr. Swenson. I do.

Mr. Johnston. And your attorney may be consulted at any time.

Mr. Swenson. Thank you.

Mr. Johnston. Would you state the dates and position you occupied in the Special Affairs Staff of CIA?

Mr. Swenson. I joined the Staff at the time it was known

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as the task force at the time of the missile crisis in Cuba, and I continued with the task force, which later became known as SAS, up to 1965, within the United States as Chief of Counterintelligence. My first job was Assistant to the Director of the Task Force for the crisis in Cuba, the missile crisis. I then became Chief of Counterintelligence.

Mr. Johnston. Do you recall exactly when you became Chief of Counterintelligence?

Mr. Swenson. I really can't.

Mr. Johnston. Can you recall the month that you left?

Mr. Swenson. Well, let me say that when I was assigned abroad I continued to have a relationship with that staff. That was during a period of assignment in Europe, so I really continued in a way to have a relationship with the Staff until I retired from the Agency in 1968. Yes, 1968.

Mr. Johnston. President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22nd, 1963, and I take it you were Chief of Counter-intelligence for the Special Affairs Staff at that time.

Mr. Swenson. I was.

Mr. Johnston. And that was the staff that was responsible for Cuban matters, is that correct?

Mr. Swenson. That is correct.

Mr. Johnston. Who were you responsible to?

Mr. Swenson. I believe at that time Harvey had been replaced by Des Fitzgerald, I believe. Des Fitzgerald was the

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1 Chief of SAS at that time.

2 Mr. Johnston. And you were responsible directly to him.

3 Mr. Swenson. Yes.

4 Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of the fact that shortly

5 after the assassination of President Kennedy, the CIA initiated

6 an investigation into the Assassination?

7 Mr. Swenson. Yes.

8 Mr. Johnston. Do you recall who was in charge of that

9 investigation?

10 Mr. Swenson. No, I do not.

11 I assume it would have been the CI Staff.

12 Mr. Johnston. Speaking of the CI Staff, who was in

13 charge of the CI Staff?

14 Mr. Swenson. Jim Angleton.

15 Mr. Johnston. And what was your responsibility to Mr.

16 Angleton?

17 Mr. Swenson. Well, there was a common interest in

18 counterintelligence matters, and if something came up which

19 required consultation, I would consult with that staff.

20 Mr. Johnston. Were you subordinate to Mr. Angleton?

21 Mr. Swenson. Not really, no.

22 Mr. Johnston. What was the relationship between SAS

23 Counterintelligence and the Counterintelligence Staff at the

24 Agency?

25 Mr. Swenson. Well, the SAS Counterintelligence Staff

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was sort of a microcosm of the Agency with emphasis on Cuban matters, Cuban intelligence service especially.

Mr. Johnston. What was the size of the Counterintelligence Staff within SAS?

Mr. Swenson. I suppose I had perhaps [redacted]

Mr. Johnston. At headquarters, is that correct?

Mr. Swenson. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. Going back now to the assassination of President Kennedy, were you aware of the fact that a special investigation was initiated shortly after the assassination that was not located in Mr Angleton's bailiwick?

Mr. Swenson. I knew that there was a special investigation but I had nothing to do with it.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know Mr. Jack Whitten, or John Whitten?

Mr. Swenson. Yes, I knew him.

Mr. Johnston. Did you know him as being in charge of the investigation of the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Swenson. I don't recall that.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever contact Mr. Whitten about the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Swenson. I did not.

Mr. Johnston. Were you personally aware of any information about Lee Harvey Oswald before the assassination?

Mr. Swenson. To the best of my recollection, it's rather

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1 hard for me to place before and after, his name appeared as
2 having paid a visit to a Cuban or Soviet embassy in Mexico
3 City, and that's about the only knowledge that I had.
4 Mr. Johnston. And you have a recollection of knowing that
5 before the assassination?
6 Mr. Swenson. Now, I cannot remember that it was before.
7 This is what I am unsure about.
8 Mr. Johnston. All right.
9 Mr. Swenson. Normally a great deal of information went
10 past the desk. I delegated screening of voluminous materials
11 which came in to various people who worked for me, and they
12 would call to my attention things which appeared significant
13 and then I would look into those. But really, as far as the
14 assassination of President Kennedy is concerned, I am afraid
15 I don't have anything to contribute. I don't know anything
16 which didn't appear in the press, really.
17 Senator Schweiker. You were never asked to conduct any
18 investigation separately or specially or apart from what --
19 Mr. Swenson. No, Senator. The only request which was
20 levied on me with regard to the assassination, as I can recall,
21 was to find whether the FBI had given to my staff any information
22 which was relevant, and I caused a search of our records to be
23 made, and I believe there had been some memorandum which was
24 relevant, which had then been passed on to Jim Angleton's
25 CI Staff, and I passed on that information, and I think that

was the full extent of it.

Mr. Johnston. Had that information been passed on to the CI Staff prior to the assassination?

Mr. Swenson. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. The routing on it, which I assume we are talking about the same thing, was the report of FBI agent Kaak on Oswald's activities in New Orleans.

Mr. Swenson. That was probably it, yes. As I say, I have a very vague recollection of it.

Mr. Johnston. And that routing sheet on that memo indicates it went to the CI Staff on November 22nd.

Is it your recollection that it went there before the assassination?

Mr. Swenson. I really can't recall. I am sorry. All I know is that McCone wanted to know had anything come in, I caused a search to be made. Normally Sam Papich, who was the Bureau liaison officer who came to my office every working day, would see one of the people working for me, now deceased, [redacted] and we would pass to the Bureau any information which appeared pertinent to the Bureau purposes, and we would receive from the Bureau anything which they considered appropriate for us.

So that the memorandum, as I recall, which came in, I has never seen, but it had been received by the office and passed on in due course.

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Mr. Johnston. What role did the SAS staff itself play in connection with the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination?

Mr. Swenson. Directly, none.

Mr. Johnston. Did you advise either Mr. Whitten or Mr. Angleton about Cuban angles to it?

Mr. Swenson. Well, we -- you know, I was very conscious of all of the activities of Cuban intelligence. Probably I was better informed than any other one individual about Cuban intelligence activities, and I knew and know of nothing which made a contribution as far as the assassination was concerned.

Mr. Johnston. Were you consulted, though, by Mr. Angleton or Mr. Whitten?

Mr. Swenson. No, I can't recall that I ever was, but I would have discussed anything probably with Des Fitzgerald. As I say, I can't recall any specific discussion because I had nothing to offer.

Senator Schweiker. Did you ever pass on any information to the CIA investigation relating to CIA attempts or plots to assassinate Castro?

Mr. Swenson. Senator, would you mind repeating that? not sure that I follow you.

Senator Schweiker. During the course of the investigation

Mr. Swenson. Of Kennedy's investigation?

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Senator Schweiker. Right.

Did you ever pass on any information relative to plots against Fidel Castro's life by Task Force W or SAS or any other?

Mr. Swenson. No, I did not pass on any such reports.

Senator Schweiker. Why did you not?

In other words, wouldn't that have been very relevant to the investigation?

Mr. Swenson. I had nothing to do with any such plots against Castro, Senator.

Mr. Johnston. Were you knowledgeable of them at the time?

Mr. Swenson. I cannot recall now whether my knowledge that there were such plots was before or after. I would just like to say I heartily disapproved of it, I thought it was a lot of nonsense, and my position on that was very clear, and I don't think people generally talked to me about it because of the way I felt.

Mr. Epstein. You said before or after. Before or after what?

Mr. Swenson. Before or after the Kennedy assassination. In other words, I can't recall that I knew that there had been plots prior to that time, or whether I knew of it subsequent to that time. My own staff was not involved in any way, and the only knowledge that came to me about it was in

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1 staff meetings and concerned people who might have been
2 involved. And I thought, as I said, it's a lot of nonsense.
3 Senator Schweiker. Were you either asked by Des Fitzgerald
4 or the Director of CIA not to discuss or pass on information
5 relating to plots to assassinate Castro?
6 Mr. Swenson. Absolutely not, no.
7 Senator Schweiker. Or anyone else?
8 Mr. Swenson. By no one.
9 Mr. Johnston. What discussions did you have with Mr.
10 Fitzgerald about the Kennedy assassination, and especially about
11 your expertise on Cuban matters?
12 Mr. Swenson. To the best of my knowledge, there was
13 never any discussion with Des about Cuban participation in a
14 plot against President Kennedy's life because it never appeared
15 pertinent.
16 Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you why you don't feel it was
17 pertinent, and let us just take as a basis for that question the
18 fact that Oswald was associated with the FPCC, and in that
19 capacity, claimed to be pro-Castro, and the fact that he
20 visited the Cuban consulate in Mexico City to attempt to get
21 a visa to Cuba shortly before the assassination.
22 Mr. Swenson. I don't think that the evidence which we
23 saw, any hard information which we had, indicated that Oswald
24 was anything but a nut, perhaps a dangerous nut. We simply
25 had no information to indicate that he was part of a Cuban

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1 intelligence organization or had any real connection with them.

2 I might add that I did talk to many people, Cubans, who

3 were knowledgeable about intelligence activities, Cuban intelli-

4 gence officers, defectors, and I got never a single bit of

5 information indicating that there was any association whatsoever.

6 Senator Schweiker. But when he went to visit the Russian

7 embassy in Cuba, it was known at the time through the intelligence

8 agencies that he was with Kostikov, who was also known to be

9 a member of Department 13, which was assassination, was it not?

10 Mr. Swenson. I did not know it at the time, and this is

11 the first I've heard of that, Senator.

12 Senator Schweiker. You did not know that?

13 Mr. Swenson. No, I did not.

14 Senator Schweiker. That he visited with Kostikov or that

15 Kostikov was a member of Department 13?

16 Mr. Swenson. I did not know either. I did have within

17 my own group some people who were Soviet experts, and we

18 kept tabs on Soviets who were in Cuba. I did a great deal of

19 research about their activities, but what you have just

20 mentioned, Senator, never came to my attention.

21 Senator Schweiker. As part of your job, which groups did

22 you work with of the Cuban exile groups specifically? In

23 other words, what one --

24 Mr. Swenson. I did not work with any of them, Senator.

25 Senator Schweiker. Well, then, which ones would you be

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1 monitoring as Chief of CI? Certainly you would be monitoring
2 some of them as Chief of CI or getting intelligence back as
3 Chief of CI.
4 Mr. Swenson. Primarily I targeted our duties against the
5 Cuban Intelligence Service. I did not deal with the Cuban
6 groups. That fell within other jurisdictions.
7 Senator Schweiker. In dealing with the Cuban Intelligence
8 Service, weren't some of these people bound to be included in
9 some of these Cuban exile groups?
10 Mr. Swenson. Let me put it this way. I did not monitor
11 groups as such.
12 Senator Schweiker. Right.
13 Mr. Swenson. I did monitor individuals so that if a
14 name which had any relationship with the perations of Cuban
15 intelligence surfaced, I would look into that very closely.
16 I cannot recall a single name that surfaced which related to
17 the Kennedy assassination or any information which I ever got
18 at any time which related to the Kennedy assassination.
19 Senator Schweiker. Do you specifically recall where some
20 of your contacts were located that you were monitoring? Were
21 they in, for example, the DRE groups or the Alpha 66 group, or
22 for example, where were some of the contacts that you were
23 monitoring?
24 Mr. Swenson. I was not monitoring contacts within those
25 groups. If a name surfaced, regardless of what group he would

be in, and he was within the United States, for example, and I felt that there was some reason to be concerned from a counterintelligence standpoint, I usually would interview him myself. I would interview him at great length. Some of these were, let's say, people who were singletons. They were not associated with any group.

The only group I can think of offhand was the AMCANOE group which I was concerned about, the penetration --

Senator Schweiker. What was that?

Mr. Swenson. AMCANOE. It was a cryptonym. I don't know it by any other name.

Senator Schweiker. Well, it would seem to me, and maybe it is a matter of functional definition, that your Cuban exiles group would be a fertile field for any intelligence activity. This is where both the pro- and anti-Castro agents were operating, where all of your activities would primarily be, wouldn't they?

Mr. Swenson. Not mine, no, Senator.

Senator Schweiker. In dealing with counterintelligence, wouldn't you have to be dealing with people who would have come out of Cuba and been working in these exile groups, unless I don't understand the nature of your job, and maybe I don't.

Mr. Swenson. Well, that's probably it, Senator. We were highly compartmentalized, and I saw my role in counterintelligence as being focused primarily on the opposite professionals,

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1 not as a groad ganged thing. We had other staff, sir, other
2 components which focused primarily on other aspects, let's
3 say, the non-professionals, the non-professionals.
4 Senator Schweiker. In other words, on Cuban intelligence
5 agents, per se, is that what you're telling me?
6 Mr. Swenson. Yes. If they were Cuban intelligence
7 agents, that was my jurisdiction.
8 Senator Schweiker. But what I'm getting at is wouldn't
9 a number of these be working undercover in the anti-Castro
10 exile groups? That would certainly be the logical cover that
11 they would come into this country on.
12 Mr. Swenson. Senator, I was very alert to this. This
13 was part of my job, so this was why I would have all of those
14 names and operational aliases where we knew them, searched
15 very carefully to see if they merited further attention, but
16 I cannot recall anything relating to any one particular group
17 except the one which I was concerned about because it appeared
18 that that was --
19 Senator Schweiker. You are saying you did not really deal
20 with groups per se.
21 Mr. Swenson. That is correct.
22 Senator Schweiker. How about if you found an agent that
23 you thought, a suspect planted in one group. Now, we know
24 CIA was operating certain of these groups. Wouldn't you have
25 gone to the case officer for that group to find out about that

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1 person?

2 Mr. Swenson. I would have gone to the other staffs, or
3 the case officer or whoever was responsible, and yes, I would
4 have discussed that. If I had any doubts about it, I would
5 have expressed them very strongly and would probably have taken
6 other measures.

7 Senator Schweiker. During your tenure as Chief of CI, were
8 you ever alarmed or concerned about leaks from our side to
9 theirs and was part of your job to plug these leaks?

10 Mr. Swenson. Yes, I was concerned and took measures to
11 plug leaks where I suspected them.

12 Senator Schweiker. Did we have substantial leaks or normal
13 leaks, or how would you describe the kind of information flowing
14 back to Castro?

15 Mr. Swenson. It is very hard to say how substantial the
16 leaks were.

17 Let me give you an example, Senator. We had operations
18 targeted against Cuba involving Cubans, resident in the United
19 States, who were often very indiscrete, so that if a mission
20 were planned to land some of them on Cuba, for example, they
21 would sometimes pick up the telephone and they would call a
22 friend, a relative in Cuba, and they thought they were being
23 very discrete, I suppose, by talking about hoping to see their
24 aunt or their grandmother or something like this, and really
25 they weren't. Those calls were monitored by the Cuban

1 intelligence service, and some of those people were arrested or
2 killed on landing. This was of great concern to me.
3 My role in this was simply the protective measure, to try
4 to determine who might be involved, and insofar as people in the
5 United States were concerned who were suspected of being
6 Cuban intelligence agents, I would discuss that with Sam Papich
7 because I felt that the Bureau had a jurisdiction within the
8 continental United States.
9 Senator Schweiker. As part of your role, would you ever
10 infiltrate an American agent to act as a double agent to find
11 what the leaks were? Was that part of your work, too?
12 Mr. Swenson. Yes, if I had had such an opportunity, I
13 would have taken it. I did not.
14 Senator Schweiker. You did not.
15 Mr. Swenson. I did not. I would have if a suitable
16 opportunity hd presented itself.
17 Senator Schweiker. All right, go ahead.
18 Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of the allegations of a man
19 named Alvarado in Mexico City?
20 Does that name ring a bell?
21 Mr. Swenson. Yeah, it is such a common name.
22 Mr. Johnston. Within three days after the assassination
23 he walked into the embassy, the U.S. embassy in Mexico, and
24 was subsequently in contact with the Chief of Station. Essen-
25 tially he alleged that he saw money passed to Oswald in the

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1 Cuban embassy in Mexico City.

2 Were you aware of that fact?

3 Mr. Swenson. I can't recall it now. I am sorry.

4 Mr. Johnston. Wouldn't that fact, an analysis of that have

5 been in your jurisdiction?

6 Mr. Swenson. If that had come to my attention at the time,

7 we would have examined it very carefully, and I would say that

8 either it was not taken seriously, or for some reason it didn't

9 get to my attention.

10 Mr. Johnston. Let me address the point of your taking it

11 seriously.

12 Mr. Alvarado's allegations were briefed to President

13 Johnson at the time they were being made. Now, are you testi-

14 fying that you were never consulted about the Alvarado

15 allegations?

16 Mr. Swenson. I do not recall them.

17 Mr. Johnston. Did you know about technical coverage on the

18 Cuban consulate and Cuban embassy in Mexico City?

19 Was that in your jurisdiction?

20 Mr. Swenson. Knowledge of it I did have. It was not

21 within my jurisdiction to operate. That was not my staff's

22 function.

23 Mr. Johnston. What does technical coverage of an embassy

24 or a consulate supposed to do?

25 Mr. Swenson. Well, when you say technical coverage, if

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1 course, that would include the use of --

2 Mr. Johnston. What is the purpose of it?

3 Mr. Swenson. Well, the purpose of it was to obtain

4 intelligence about hostile intentions.

5 Mr. Johnston. Were you ever asked whether any of Oswald's

6 contacts in Mexico City were DGI?

7 Mr. Swenson. I can't recall the specific question

8 directed to me on that score, but had I known of any DGI contacts

9 with Oswald, I would have discussed them.

10 Mr. Johnston. How would you have known who the contacts

11 were?

12 Mr. Swenson. Well, my role was really the Cuban intelli-

13 gence service, and we went to great lengths to keep track of

14 Cuban intelligence officers, their contacts, and their

15 activities.

16 Mr. Johnston. How would you have known whose Oswald's

17 contacts were?

18 Mr. Swenson. I would have known only if one of those

19 known contacts of Cuban intelligence had been in touch with

20 anybody, and if Oswald's name had surfaced, I would have looked

21 at that.

22 Mr. Johnston. But you were never given a name or a group

23 of names of the Cubans with whom Oswald may have been in contact

24 in Mexico City.

25 Mr. Swenson. I do not recall that, no.

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Mr. Johnston. And given your advice on whether they were DGI.

Mr. Swenson. However, let me go a step further. I prepared a rather elaborate system of identification of people connected with Cuban intelligence service. This was computerized so that people who had clearances were welcome to look at that list for any connections. So this group, like Jack Whitten's group, which had a specific function, could have simply looked at that. They need not have talked to me.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you whether in November of 1963 you were aware of an operation that had the code name AMLASH.

Mr. Swenson. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. And do you know who AMLASH was, his real identity?

Mr. Swenson. I did know, yes.

Let's go off the record. I can't recall his name.

Mr. Johnston. Let's go off the record.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Johnston. Back on the record, did you know back in November 1963 that the CIA was meeting with AMLASH?

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

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you a preliminary question. Have you ever been asked by this Committee as to your knowledge and

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AMLASH?

Mr. Swenson. No.

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

Mr. Swenson. I believe I did. I have a vague recollection of that now, yes.

Mr. Johnston. And do you know about the purpose of that meeting?

Mr. Swenson. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. What was the purpose of that meeting?

Mr. Swenson. 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.

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

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

Mr. Johnston. But he told you he was going ahead with the operation.

Mr. Swenson. I expressed my reservations about it. He went ahead. He didn't ask my permission. He was my boss.

Mr. Johnston. Did you in fact know about the October 22...

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1 meeting [redacted]

2 Mr. Swenson. I knew he had the meeting, yes.

3 Mr. Johnston. That Mr. Fitzgerald personally had

4 gone to the meeting.

5 Mr. Swenson. Yes.

6 Mr. Johnston. Did you know that Mr. Fitzgerald had

7 assured AMLASH that he was the personal representative of

8 Attorney General Kennedy?

9 Mr. Swenson. No, I don't know that he did that.

10 Mr. Johnston. And again as a matter of background, have

11 you read the Committee's report on assassinations?

12 Mr. Swenson. I have not.

13 Mr. Johnston. Did you know that on November 22nd,

14 1963 the case officer was meeting with AMLASH?

15 Mr. Swenson. I believe I knew that about that time there

16 was to be a meeting.

17 Mr. Johnston. Did you also know that proposed for the

18 meeting was the fact that the case officer was going to offer

19 AMLASH a poison pen?

20 Mr. Swenson. No, I did not.

21 Mr. Johnston. You had no knowledge at the time of the

22 poison pen?

23 Mr. Swenson. No. As I told you, I disagreed basically

24 with the whole thrust of the AMLASH operation. My disapproval

25 of it was very strong. Des Fitzgerald knew it, and Des rea...

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preferred not to discuss it anymore with me.

Senator Schweiker. What was the basis of your disapproval? I mean, why did you disagree?

Mr. Swenson. Well, I didn't think it was a sensible operation, Senator. I felt first that we were dealing with people whose bona fides were subject to question, whose professionalism was subject to question, and I felt that if they had succeeded in killing Castro, that he might have been succeeded by his brother, for example, who would be worse. So I thought it was a pointless operation. I thought it was a lot of nonsense.

Mr. Johnston. Were you asked to provide counterintelligence support for the AMLASH operation?

Mr. Swenson. I provide counterintelligence support for everything in the sense that I have already described. Any names which came up I would check for.

Mr. Johnston. But specifically for AMLASH.

Mr. Swenson. Well, in debriefing people connected with Cuban intelligence, I had a lot of names, and I had collected a lot of information, including information on AMLASH, so that information which I collected I turned over to them.

Mr. Johnston. Were you ever asked specifically what seems to me to be a logical question before CIA went and met with AMLASH, that question being, is this operation se[illegible]

Mr. Swenson. As I have already indicated to you, I t[illegible]

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them I disapproved it, I didn't trust the people, I didn't consider it a good operation on security grounds or any grounds.

Mr. Wallach. Did you consider it an assassination operation?

Mr. Swenson. Did I consider it?

Mr. Wallach. Is that how it was explained to you, an assassination plot?

Mr. Swenson. Oh, that's it, yes.

Senator Schweiker. There wasn't any doubt in your mind about that.

Mr. Swenson. That that was the intent of it? No. I just thought it was silly.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of the statement that Fidel Castro made to the AP reporter Daniel Harker on September 7th, 1963, and in that statement said the U.S. was meeting with dissident groups and was planning to eliminate Cuban leaders, and that Cuba would retaliate if that continued?

Mr. Swenson. I don't have a firm recollection now. I probably did.

Mr. Johnston. Let me go then to 1965.

What happened with the AMLASH operation, to your recollection, in 1965?

Mr. Swenson. I draw a completely blank. I don't remember now.

Mr. Johnston. Do you remember the name

Mr. Swenson. Not really.

Mr. Johnston. Let me refresh your recollection, that at least according to the files, you and the FBI met with [redacted] in New York City in 1965.

Mr. Swenson. Excuse me. The name still doesn't ring a bell. I met with a Cuban in New York in 1965 for the purpose of training him and sending him back to Cuba.

Is this what you are talking about?

Mr. Johnston. No. [redacted] was part of the AMLASH group that had knowledge of the AMLASH operation as it had evolved into 1965.

Mr. Swenson. Yes I remember the man now, yes, yes I do.

Mr. Johnston. Did you meet with him and debrief him?

Mr. Swenson. Yes, yes I did. I met him at the FBI office in New York.

Mr. Johnston. At that time did you know of any connections between [redacted] and anything dealing with the investigation into President Kennedy's assassination?

Mr. Swenson. I can't recall. Anything which I knew about [redacted] I would have put into the memorandum at the time after I met him at the New York Office. And I couldn't even remember the name, as I told you, until now.

I do know that he went into the office, that he wanted to see someone, I believe it was Sam Papich that first told me of it, and I went in for the purpose of debriefing him, and

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remember he made a number of allegations, all of which I recorded in a memorandum at the time.

Mr. Johnston. Do you remember that he alleged that one of the CIA officers [redacted] had been compromised by Cuban intelligence officers?

Mr. Swenson. Yes, I remember that.

Mr. Johnston. Was that true?

Mr. Swenson. I don't know whether it was true or not. I would say that the number of operations that were being conducted [redacted] again were not secure from a counterintelligence standpoint. I thought that they were rather sloppy, and I indicated that.

Mr. Johnston. One of your memoranda that you wrote after the [redacted] meeting states -- and all I have are my notes from it -- the AMLASH circle is wide, and each new friend of whom we learn seems to have knowledge of the plan. I believe the problem is a more serious and basic one. Fidel reportedly knew in 1962 that the group was plotting against him and enlisted its support. Hence we cannot rule out the possibility of provocation.

Do you recall that memorandum?

Mr. Swenson. This is true, and this is what I testified to already. I had serious misgivings about the security of the whole operation.

Mr. Johnston. And what did you mean by provocation?

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Mr. Swenson. I meant that the Cubans might have been trying to turn their knowledge of what we were doing to their purposes, if only for propaganda purposes.

I felt from the outset the whole thing was nonsense, as I have said repeatedly, and in my debriefings of people, the more I learned, the more insecure it appeared to me, so I simply continued to oppose such ventures. I thought they were silly.

Senator Schweiker. Knowing Fidel Castro's personality and temperament, and on the assumption that you were right, that he had some knowledge of these operations which you feared, obviously, from the record of what you said, wouldn't you possibly have meant provocation more than just reciprocating with propaganda, knowing his personality?

Mr. Swenson. Well, I would have considered any type of retaliatory measure by Castro, and this was the purpose of the dissemination of such material to other government agencies which had jurisdiction, such as the FBI and the Secret Service.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you, isn't it obvious that if CIA was plotting to assassinate Castro and he became aware of it, that he might retaliate, especially when he had warned about retaliation?

Mr. Swenson. It is possible, of course. This is one of the things that concerned me, but I never knew that as a result of all of this there was any attempt on the part of the Cuban

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1 government or of Cuban intelligence to assassinate the President.

2 Mr. Johnston. Did you conduct an investigation in order to

3 determine whether the Cuban government had retaliated specifically

4 for the AMLASH operation?

5 Mr. Swenson. Well, your using the term investigation is

6 what is puzzling me here. What I did is a constant function,

7 was to look for any activities on the part of opposition

8 services which would threaten the United States or people in the

9 United States, United States security. This was a continuing

10 function. There was no particular investigation except as

11 part of what I did all the time. The AMLASH group was of

12 concern to me because I thought they were sloppy, but I never

13 did find out from all of the many interviews I conducted, and

14 the research I did, and that of everybody on my staff, that

15 there was ever any attempt on the part of the Cubans to

16 assassinate the President.

17 Mr. Johnston. Are you aware of an agent who was involved

18 in the AMLASH operation who had the crypt AMWHIP?

19 Mr. Swenson. This goes back a long time. I remember the

20 AMWHIP.

21 Mr. Johnston. Let me mention his name off the record.

22 (Discussion off the record.)

23 Mr. Johnston. Back on the record.

24 Did you ever suggest that either AMLASH or AMWHIP be

25 interrogated about the Kennedy assassination and its connection

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to the AMLASH operation?

Mr. Swenson. I cannot recall whether I suggested it or not. I believe I did question AMWHIP myself.

Mr. Johnston. In what year?

Mr. Swenson. This I can't recall, the exact timeframe. It is quite a long time ago.

Mr. Johnston. Was that 1965 that AMWHIP was interrogated?

Mr. Swenson. I would say it was probably in 1965 because it was in 1965 that I departed for Europe, and I think it was prior to my departure, and that's the best I can do about fixing it.

Mr. Johnston. Did you ever talk to the case officer who had been at the November 22nd meeting about whether anything was mentioned at the meeting that might indicate retaliation?

Mr. Swenson. I probably did. I can't recall anything specific, but I talked to the people, to the case officers who were involved. They were well aware of my reservations about people with whom they were dealing.

Mr. Johnston. After the assassination of President Kennedy, did you have any discussion with Mr. Fitzgerald or Mr. Helms about the possibility of retaliation because of the AMLASH operation?

Mr. Swenson. I would say that possibly at a staff meeting I might have mentioned the possibility with Des Fitzgerald, but I had no concrete information to indicate that there was

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an attempt at retaliation.

Mr. Johnston. And who would have been at that staff meeting?

Mr. Swenson. Probably Sam Halpern, Seymour Bolten, possibly [redacted] There are a couple of others whose faces I recall but I don't know that I'd even remember their names.

Senator Schweiker. Would the Director have been there?

Mr. Swenson. No, he would not.

Mr. Johnston. Would Mr. Helms have been there?

Mr. Swenson. No, he would not.

Mr. Johnston. And can you place a date, an approximate date on the staff meeting, or at least a date in relation?

Mr. Swenson. We had staff meetings just daily, sir.

Mr. Johnston. Was it about the time of the Kennedy assassination or shortly after the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Swenson. I am sure that in that general timeframe there was a staff meeting, and I would have at the time expressed any counterintelligence views which I considered appropriate, just warnings, or let's say, being careful.

Mr. Johnston. Well, let me refine it.

Do you have a recollection of mentioning a connection or the possibility of a connection between AMLASH and Kennedy's assassination at a staff meeting?

Do you have a recollection of doing that?

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Mr. Swenson. I don't have a firm recollection now. You had a memorandum from which you quoted.

Mr. Johnston. Apparently a 1965 memorandum?

Mr. Swenson. I can't recall anything as of the Kennedy assassination, nothing definite.

Mr. Johnston. Do you recall such a discussion now?

Mr. Swenson. Not positively.

Mr. Johnston. That you said that sometime.

Mr. Swenson. What I am getting at is that this is one of the things I would normally have considered.

Senator Schweiker. You're saying it may have occurred.

Mr. Swenson. It may have occurred, but I don't have any firm recollection.

Mr. Peloquin. May we go off the record?

Senator Schweiker. Sure.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Johnston. Back on the record. My question to you is this. Do you have a recollection of a staff meeting at some time with the participants you described at which a possibility of a connection between AMLASH operation and the Kennedy assassination was discussed?

Mr. Swenson. No specific recollection, no.

Mr. Johnston. Did it occur to you at the time that there might be some such connection?

Mr. Swenson. I am merely assuming that I would have

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explored or would have thought about it as well as all other ramification.

Mr. Johnston. I'm not asking you at this point --

Mr. Swenson. I don't remember.

Mr. Johnston. I'm not asking you at this point whether you explored it. I'm just asking you whether you drew a possibility of a connection in your mind?

Mr. Swenson. I probably would have. I don't have any specific recollection of it.

Mr. Johnston. Do you now draw the possibility of a connection?

Mr. Swenson. As a possibility, yes, but all of my efforts over a long period of time which were say exhaustive and extensive, both, failed to produce any connection. I would be mindful at all times of such possibilities in everything that I did, and I interrogated many people, I interviewed many people. I read reports from many sources. I never found even a thread of a connection.

Mr. Johnston. Well, let me ask you as a specific fact whether you knew that on November 22nd an aircraft flight in Mexico City, a Cubana aircraft flight from Mexico City to Havana was detained from about 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon until 10:00 o'clock in the evening awaiting a passenger who arrived in a twin-engined aircraft, who bypassed Customs and who rode in the pilot's cabin on the flight to Havana?

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Mr. Swenson. I have no recollection of it.

Mr. Johnston. Do you have any recollection of checking into that, either receiving that or checking into that?

Mr. Swenson. Not specifically.

Senator Schweiker. Do any recollections come back to you of unusual movement of Cuban intelligence agents immediately prior to, during and after the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Swenson. They do not, Senator.

Mr. Wallach. I am sorry I had to miss the beginning of your testimony and I may be going over something that was already asked. Just let me know.

It is my understanding that you were aware generally of the AMLASH operation and the purpose of the operation in 1963.

Mr. Swenson. Generally and specifically both, I would say.

Mr. Wallach. You were aware that there was a meeting set up with AMLASH in Brazil in September of 1963 or thereabouts?

Mr. Swenson. I cannot recall. I would have known probably that there was such a meeting to be held. I was on record as considering that this was a dangerous and stupid operation.

Mr. Wallach. The meeting in Brazil with AMLASH was -- can you give me that?

Mr. Johnston. September 5th, or early September.

Mr. Swenson. I cannot remember the exact dates. It was a long time ago.

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Mr. Wallach. With AMLASH's case officer, correct, and then subsequently appearing in a September 7th edition of the New Orleans Times-Picayune, Fidel Castro goes down to the Brazilian consulate in Havana and makes a speech or grants an interview to Daniel Harker, the AP reporter, and specifically uses the words "eliminate" --

Mr. Swenson. I believe this has already been covered.

Mr. Wallach. I know Jim did raise that but what I'm asking you is whether or not in your counterintelligence background and your knowledge of Castro whether or not Castro's -- A, the fact that he granted an interview; and B, the fact that he apparently went to the Brazilian consulate, which I understand that he did not frequent very often, has any significance? I am asking this to you as an expert.

Mr. Swenson. Mr. Castro is a very bold, imaginative person who is capable of doing anything. Does it have some special significance relating to the Kennedy assassination? I don't see any.

Mr. Epstein. The suggestion has been made that he chose the Brazilian consulate because that was his method of getting a message, if the operation had been compromised, that he had learned of the meeting that had happened in Brazil in September of 1963. The suggestion has been made that that is the way he was getting the message to the United States.

Do you remember that ever being discussed or considered?

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Mr. Swenson. I don't recall that, no.

Mr. Epstein. In retrospect, now, is that an issue that is considerable by counterintelligence people, and does it trigger any kind of thoughts in your own head when you hear it now?

Mr. Swenson. Well, you see there are so many things that were going on all over Latin America with regard to Cuban activities in the different countries, I would go to Brazil, for example, or, for example, of seeing people who had been connected with Cuban intelligence, and debriefing them and so on, and I would not read that Castro's visit to the Brazilian installation had anything to do with the Kennedy -- had anything to do with a whole host of things.

Mr. Epstein. No. The issue is whether his visit to the Brazilian consulate would have had anything to do with --

Mr. Swenson. With getting our attention --

Mr. Epstein. Getting our attention, and indeed, the veracity of his assertion, that he had learned of plots --

Mr. Swenson. I would not attribute that special significance to it because there were so many reasons he could have done it.

Mr. Johnston. Let me go back to the aircraft. I show you Director Cable 8604 dated 30 November '63, which is the cable to Mexico City about this fact, and I call your attention to the upper left hand corner which would indicate SAS, EOB

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is the drafter of that?

Mr. Swenson. Uh-huh.

Mr. Johnston. And EOB is what office in SAS?

Mr. Swenson. I cannot recall what it meant right now, nor can I recognize the initials.

Let me see if I can read this first.

(The Witness reads the document.)

Mr. Swenson. I'm sorry. Normally they would have put down my own group here, SAS/CI. This apparently did not reach me for some reason.

Senator Schweiker. What does that SAS up there mean?

Mr. Swenson. Well, the SAS referred to the task force, really, Special Affairs Staff. They changed the name of the task force. And then the slash was to separate it from some component, and I think that the EOB -- they changed names -- I think that the EOB had to do with a staff which was trying to engage in positive intelligence operations against Cuba, things like AMCANOE and AMLASH, but I really can't tell you the exact destination, but you'll note that it did not come to my staff.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you, did you receive information about a Cuban-American by the name of Gilberto Policarpo Lopez?

Mr. Swenson. At the time the name does not ring any recollections.

(Discussion off the record.)

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Mr. Johnston. Gilberto Lopez crossed the border from Texas into Mexico on the 23rd of November. The border had been closed by Mexican authorities on the 22nd, after the assassination. He went to Mexico City, arriving there on the 25th of November, and on the 27th of November departed as the only passenger on a Cubana airline flight to Havana.

Do any of those facts --

Mr. Swenson. They really don't register with me now.

Mr. Johnston. Do you ever recall being consulted about that trip?

Mr. Swenson. I simply have no recollection at all.

Mr. Johnston. Could you have made a contribution on that?

Mr. Swenson. I would have, let's say, searched through the computer runs to see if such an individual had ever been a contact of Cuban intelligence service. Other than that, I don't know what I could have done because in Mexico City there were people who were there for that purpose.

Senator SChweiker. Here is one of the copies we are talking about. We just wonder if it helps you to recollect.

(The Witness reads the document.)

Mr. Swenson. The only thing I can say, Senator, is when they mention ODENVY, which is the Bureau, if it was a Cuban affair, any discussion with the Bureau should have been through me. I do not now have any recollection of this.

Senator Schweiker. Here is one referring to something

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about his activities in Los Angeles. At that particular time he was coming out of Miami, as I recall.

Mr. Johnston. Let me correct for the record. Initially they have identified -- they thought he was the same as Gilberto Lopez who was in Los Angeles. Subsequently they found it was not true.

Mr. Wallach. Who did you deal with at the Bureau? Did you deal with Papich or did you deal with someone directly?

Mr. Swenson. Usually Papich stopped in my office every day, every working day.

Mr. Wallach. Did you have any direct contacts with anyone at the Bureau in the Domestic Intelligence section?

Mr. Swenson. I think someone else came over one time. I don't remember his name, a young fellow who is far lower in category than Sam. The only times I dealt with other people in the Bureau were on those occasions when we had to cooperate in a joint operation such as their transferring an agent to me who was going to send him back to Cuba, that sort of thing.

Mr. Wallach. Prior to the assassination, or immediately after the assassination, did you ever sit in on any of the meetings where Bureau persons were present and Cuban policy was generally discussed?

Mr. Swenson. I did not.

Senator Schweiker. We came across some documents in the FBI that as of about 1961, that the FBI had surveilled about 200

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1 agents, or 200 potential agents who were with the Fair Play for
2 Cuba Committee as possible Cuban intelligence personnel.
3 Does this ring a bell with you, and what do you recall about
4 the information supplied to you by the FBI on the Fair Play for
5 Cuba?
6 Mr. Swenson. Well, we received a great deal of information,
7 Senator, from the Bureau about people like this who might be
8 sympathetic to Cuba. I was not interested in a positive
9 operation, by function, unless there was a Cuban intelligence
10 connection, unless there was a way that I could use that to
11 penetrate the Cuban intelligence service. Other staffs were
12 interested in it for other purposes, for debriefing them, for
13 positive intelligence, and anything that could be gleaned, sort
14 of a vacuum cleaner approach. My approach was strictly --
15 Senator SChweiker. Penetration.
16 Mr. Swenson. Penetration of the Cuban intelligence
17 service, or protection of our own resources.
18 So I did not get involved in that.
19 Now, had one of those individuals had a meeting with a
20 known Cuban intelligence officer, then I would have been
21 concerned and would have become involved.
22 Senator Schweiker. Do you recall after the assassination
23 the Cuban policy review that was initiated by the Director,
24 after the Kennedy assassination, a review of the whole Cuban
25 kolicy of the CIA?

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Mr. Swenson. I have a vague recollection of it, but only a vague recollection.

Senator Schweiker. Do you recall what form it took or just how it was done?

Mr. Swenson. Well, my best recollection was that he wanted to be sure that no one had been remiss, and he wanted to take a look at the scope of the operation before, and whether it should be maintained at the same level and things of this nature. I was not directly involved. My own staff's function was clearcut, and up until the time I left, continued in the same form.

Senator Schweiker. Was this done through written report to the Director, or how was this done?

Mr. Swenson. I customarily -- this is a management procedure in my own staff -- kept track of how we were doing, what we spent, what we needed, and how effective we were, and I don't recall any special effort at that time to give more than I had already done. I think they could have taken any one of the reports that I submitted, and it would have presented the situation as of the time.

Senator Schweiker. After the review was completed, did the Director send out an internal directive as to the future Cuban policy?

Mr. Swenson. Senator, I just don't remember. I am sorry.

Senator Schweiker. Did you have any specific dealings with

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1 Alpha 66, any recollections of agents?

2 Mr. Swenson. I remember the name, and that is all, Senator.

3 Senator Schweiker. No specific case.

4 Mr. Swenson. I don't recall anything specific. If there

5 had been somebody who was incidentally a member of that group

6 who would have had a connection with Cuban intelligence, I

7 would have looked into it, but I don't remember now.

8 Mr. Epstein. What did you mean by the word remiss, that

9 part of the reassessment of Cuban policy involved the study of

10 whether you had been remiss?

11 Mr. Swenson. I think the then Director McCone then wanted

12 to make sure that nobody had dropped the ball. For example,

13 he wanted to know what information had gone to the Bureau,

14 what information the Bureau had sent us, and where it was.

15 Mr. Epstein. You mean with respect to Oswald?

16 Mr. Swenson. Yes.

17 Mr. Epstein. Were any deficiencies found as a result?

18 Mr. Swenson. Not that I know of.

19 Mr. Epstein. Would that be a different kind of review

20 than a policy review?

21 Mr. Swenson. Oh, yes.

22 Mr. Epstein. Well, I'm splitting it into two categories.

23 In other words, did we miss something?

24 Mr. Swenson. Well, it would be different. I mean, when

25 the President is assassinated, every bit of effort which could

be brought to bear was brought to bear, to look for anything which pertained to it. I drew a blank. I didn't find anything.

Mr. Epstein. What I'm asking you is were there two types of --

Mr. Swenson. There were two different things.

Mr. Epstein. Two different types of assessment made. One would be what should this agency's policy or this government's policy be with respect to Cuba, i.e., what kinds of operations should we run hereinafter, and two, did we drop the ball in the past?

Mr. Swenson. Well, I would say that this sort of reassessment was probably done, and Des Fitzgerald was probably involved in it at this time. I don't recall that I made any particular contribution.

Mr. Epstein. Do you recall whether that included any assessment of the possibility of the AMLASH operation having been compromised?

Mr. Swenson. No, I can't recall anything specific about it.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask -- I show you a document dated 23 November 1963, which is a memorandum for the Acting Deputy Director of Plans from the acting Chief of the SR Division, which was in Mr. Angleton's staff, and the subject is the contact of Lee Oswald with a member of Soviet KGB assassination department. The contents I don't think are of great

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bearing to you except for the fact that that document mainly is a two-page analysis of the possible significance of Oswald's possible contact with Kostikov and possible Soviet involvement.

My question is, given the fact that the Soviet experts in counterintelligence would do an analysis like this, why was not SAS counterintelligence doing a similar analysis?

Mr. Swenson. I can hardly tell you more than I have on that subject. I simply had a continual function of looking at all operations of the Cuban intelligence service. I could not have done any more than I was doing, so I continued doing what I -- I never recall seeing this.

Mr. Johnston. Did you receive any orders to first of all investigate the connection between AMLASH and the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Swenson. No.

Mr. Johnston. Did you receive any orders to conduct an investigation into the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Swenson. No.

Mr. Johnston. Did you receive any orders to cooperate either with Mr. Whitten's investigations or Mr. Angleton's investigation?

Mr. Swenson. No. My cooperation would have been given had it been asked for.

Senator Schweiker. When you interviewed AMWHIP, what deductions did you draw out of your interview with AMWHIP

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about possible linkage between AMLASH and the Kennedy assassination?

Mr. Swenson. I didn't draw any specific conclusions that I can recall, Senator. I didn't think he was a very impressive or true to form individual.

Senator Schweiker. Did it confirm in any way your fears that Castro might have had knowledge of AMLASH's operation?

Mr. Swenson. No, sir.

Senator Schweiker. So you drew no conclusions from your briefing?

Mr. Swenson. Well, this is a long time later, but so far as I can recall, my conclusions were that he was a person prone to exaggerate his importance, and that a lot of it was sort of gossip, and that he was not really what I would have considered a very effective agent.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware of the polygraph of AMWHIP?

Mr. Swenson. I cannot recall now.

Mr. Johnston. Were you aware that the polygraph indicated deception on questions related to his ties to Cuban intelligence and AMLASH's ties to Cuban intelligence?

Mr. Swenson. I'm really drawing a blank on this now. I don't know.

Mr. Johnston. Were you interviewed in 1967 by an Inspector General in connection with the report of the Inspector General's office on assassination plots?

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Mr. Swenson. 1967?

Senator Schweiker. For the IG investigation.

Mr. Swenson. No, because I would have been in Europe at that time.

Mr. Johnston. Did they come to Europe to talk to you?

Mr. Swenson. No.

Mr. Johnston. Did you come back to talk to Mr. Earman or anyone in the Inspector General's office about --

Mr. Swenson. No. When I came back from Europe, which was about the time that I had said I intended to leave the Agency, I had a meeting with the IG at the time, with a number of people, who tried to persuade me to stay, and I said I was not interested in staying.

There were no specifics that were raised in those discussions.

Mr. Johnston. You don't recall being interviewed about assassination plots?

Mr. Swenson. Absolutely not.

Mr. Johnston. Were you knowledgeable of the CIA dealings with the Mafia and attempts to assassinate?

Mr. Swenson. Long after the time.

Mr. Johnston. Not at the time?

Mr. Swenson. Long after the time.

Mr. Epstein. How long afterwards?

Mr. Wallach. After the assassination?

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1 Mr. Swenson. Long after that?

2 Mr. Epstein. While you were still in Washington?

3 Mr. Swenson. Probably after I left Washington. I think
4 I probably might have heard some what you might call scuttlebutt
5 about it, second or third hand comments about it, but I didn't
6 have any real specific knowledge about it.

7 Mr. Epstein. How did you come to be consulted on the
8 AMLASH problem?

9 Mr. Swenson. I don't think it was a matter of my being
10 consulted. I think it was a matter of my expressing doubts about
11 the AMLASH operation.

12 Mr. Epstein. How did you learn of it, do you remember
13 that?

14 Mr. Swenson. Because his name came up -- names would
15 be run through my shop to see if there was a bearing on
16 Cuban intelligence operations, and I had debriefed Cuban
17 intelligence officers, that is, interrogated them in depth and
18 had extracted as much information as I could, and one of the
19 persons concerning whom I got information was he.

20 Mr. Epstein. And that information was that he was not
21 reliable?

22 Mr. Swenson. I felt there was good reason to doubt his
23 reliability.

24 Mr. Epstein. So you would be preparing a response to the
25 name check request, is that how you would come to learn of

1 they were interested?

2 I'm still not quite clear on how you learned they had

3 the assassination plot.

4 Mr. Peloquin. Can we go off the record for a second?

5 Senator Schweiker. Sure.

6 (Discussion off the record.)

7 Mr. Swenson. Mike, trying to answer your question, when

8 matters were surfaced at staff meetings at which I was present,

9 I expressed my views and I would do my homework and I would

10 go back and check any things which came up. Additionally when

11 I was interrogating intelligence people in the course of

12 debriefing them as thoroughly as possible, I would disseminate

13 that information to other people on the staff, and I believe

14 that the AMLASH, the results of my debriefings on AMLASH and

15 the purposes for which they intended to use him, I had come

16 up on both these contacts that I had obtained information

17 concerning him that was not all favorable, and that at a staff

18 meeting his name was mentioned.

19 Mr. Johnston. Are memos prepared on these staff meetings?

20 Mr. Swenson. No, they generally were not.

21 Mr. Johnston. You don't have any record of what transpired?

22 Mr. Swenson. No, because generally staff meetings were

23 held every day, and the cables which came in which were

24 considered appropriate for discussion were discussed. If there

25 was anything that you had to note for your purposes, you did

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1 it. But there was no formal --

2 Mr. Wallach. Who decided what cables were to be discussed

3 or the topic of discussion?

4 Mr. Swenson. Well, I would raise any cables which had

5 a counterintelligence importance, and which I considered

6 should be discussed with other people, you know. If we had

7 staff meetings all day long, we wouldn't get anything done.

8 Mr. Wallach. Was Helms ever present at any of these

9 staff meetings?

10 Mr. Swenson. No.

11 Mr. Epstein. Did there ever reach a point in time when

12 you received an indication from debriefing intelligence officers

13 or in any other way that specifically the AMLASH assassination

14 plot against Castro had been compromised?

15 Mr. Swenson. No. I can't recall any specific.

16 Mr. Epstein. Do you recall any discussion surrounding

17 the Castro speech at the Brazilian consulate relating to the

18 question of whether some CIA operation had been compromised

19 and that that is what Castro was referring to?

20 Mr. Swenson. I don't recall and I have no specific

21 recollection of that, no.

22 Mr. Epstein. Following the assassination of President

23 Kennedy, I think you have testified that there were staff

24 meetings at which you were present and which the issue of

25 retaliation was --

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Mr. Swenson. I said I had no specific recollection. But I would assume now that that might have been mentioned.

Mr. Epstein. Was there any specific investigative responsibility or counterintelligence responsibility levied or divided or assigned at those meetings with respect to determining whether or not the Cuban government was involved in the assassination?

Mr. Swenson. I can't recall any specific requirement that was levied on me for example, but it really wasn't necessary. I mean, it was an obvious thing which I would look for to see if there was anything. This was part of my ongoing responsibility, and I never found any relationship.

Mr. Epstein. Was an instruction issued to the WAVE station to determine that issue?

Mr. Swenson. Possibly. I have no recollection. Possibly it was.

Mr. Epstein. What I'm getting at here is the question of whether or not that is a logical issue to arise in debriefings and a logical issue to be handled by the counterintelligence people if it comes up in the course of a contact with a source or an asset as distinguished from specific instructions to contact all known sources, informants, assets, and operations to determine any and all information bearing on that issue.

Mr. Swenson. I simply cannot recall anything specific on the subject.

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Mr. Epstein. You don't recall that kind of an instruction being issued.

Mr. Swenson. No.

Mr. Epstein. Do you recall any discussion or decision to involve or to run a counterintelligence operation specifically designed to determine that fact?

Mr. Swenson. No.

Mr. Epstein. Was it ever considered?

Mr. Swenson. I can't recall that any such was considered. REally, good counterintelligence operations depend on having something tangible which you can use. So if there was ever an opportunity for any counterintelligence operation, I would examine it in the light of the approach which was feasible and how we could exploit it to the maximum degree. I cannot recall that there was ever an opportunity to do anything which would throw light on the Kennedy assassination.

Mr. Epstein. With respect to the connection between the CIA and the underworld figures with respect to the assassination plot.

Mr. Swenson. I know nothing about that at all, strictly hearsay long after that.

Mr. Epstein. I would like your help in understanding why that kind of an operation would not have been useful, the knowledge of that kind of an operation and the details of who was involved in it would not have been useful or relevant

from a counterintelligence standpoint in order for you in your general business to determine what sources the Agency had, what assets they had, and if a person was in a position --

Mr. Swenson. I believe it might have been relevant, but it was never discussed with me, and to the best of my knowledge, underworld contacts had occurred prior to the Kennedy assassination and prior to the time that I became chief of Counterintelligence.

Mr. Epstein. Were you aware of who those contacts were?

Mr. Swenson. At the time?

Mr. Epstein. Right.

Mr. Swenson. No. I read about it in the newspapers.

Mr. Epstein. Were you aware at that time that there were contacts?

Mr. Swenson. At that time, no.

Senator Schweiker. Have you finished your point, Mike?

Mr. Epstein. Yes.

Senator Schweiker. Can you just very briefly recall what relationship did General Lansdale and MONGOOSE have to your relationship functionally, organically, or structurally?

Mr. Swenson. I would say there was none, Senator.

Senator Schweiker. None?

What he was doing, I have heard different versions of how it was set up and one version was that at one point he was overall coordinator, including the CIA component. The

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other version I have is that he was really working primarily with Defense and State and other non-CIA agencies in his MONGOOSE work.

What is your best recollection of that?

Mr. Swenson. I had no occasion to meet with him or participate in any discussion with members of his group, but Des Fitzgerald certainly knew him and met with him. There was no, let's say, reporting function by anybody in the Agency that I knew of to Lansdale.

Senator Schweiker. In other words, Des Fitzgerald --

Mr. Swenson. Did not report to him.

Senator Schweiker. On a regular basis or rather not a regular basis? In other words, it was sort of a separate operation from what you recollect?

Mr. Swenson. My best recollection --

Senator Schweiker. And just coordinated.

Mr. Swenson. Yes.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you first of all, was Raul Roa, Jr. --

Mr. Swenson. Was he what?

Mr. Johnston. DGI, or was he suspected of being DGI?

Mr. Swenson. I was very hazy on that. I was very interested in Raul Roa, Jr., because possibly he could provide useful intelligence, but I cannot recall that there was anything that really indicated he had an intelligence

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function.

Mr. Johnston. How about Carlos Lachuga, who was Raul Roa's successor at the United Nations, was he DGI?

Mr. Swenson. I think there was suspicion that he was, but I don't think we had positive information.

Mr. Johnston. Do you recall the name of Charles Santos Bushe, who was one of the founders of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee?

Mr. Swenson. It doesn't ring a bell with me now.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you finally, did Mr. Fitzgerald have a principal deputy on Cuban matters?

Mr. Swenson. Well, you're talking -- you see, Des Fitzgerald for a time succeeded Bill Harvey as Chief of the Task Force when it became Special Affairs Staff. Subsequently, the Special Affairs Staff was reincorporated in the WH Division. At that time Des Fitzgerald became the Chief of WH, and John Hart became the Chief of the SAS component. So SAS became like bigger than any branch, but still responding to Chief, WH, which it had not before.

Mr. Johnston. In November 1963 did he have a principal deputy?

Mr. Swenson. November of '63?

I don't think so, no.

Senator Schweiker. Does a Cuban intelligence agent by the name of Ruiez, R-u-i-z ring any bell with you?

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Mr. Swenson. Ruiz? Senator, it doesn't ring a bell with me now. At the time it might have, I don't know. It is a rather common name, Senator.

Senator Schweiker. So you wouldn't know offhand if that was a particular Cuban in the intelligence organization.

Mr. Swenson. I wouldn't know.

Senator Schweiker. There's an allegation that he was in Dealey Plaza that day. I want to make clear it is just an allegation.

Mr. Swenson. I have no recollection.

Mr. Wallach. Do you have a recollection of any suspected Cuban agents being in the Dallas area the day of the assassination?

Mr. Swenson. No.

Mr. Wallach. Not that they had anything to do with the assassination.

Mr. Swenson. I do not.

Mr. Wallach. Let me go back a second to a line of questioning that Mr. Epstein was asking before.

Do you recall at any of the meetings, the staff meetings or otherwise, immediately after the assassination, and shortly after the assassination of President Kennedy, whether there was any discussion as to A, whether the CIA had jurisdiction to look into the assassination and to investigate the assassination, or B, whether it was just the FBI's job

and that the CIA would respond to any requests from the FBI.

In all fairness -- well, I'm sorry. Just go ahead and answer the question.

Mr. Swenson. Well, I remember we had a number of discussions, many of which were informal at the time.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. Swenson. In answer to your question, there were never discussions as to who does what and so forth, but let's say it was very clear in my mind as to where, what the Agency's role was and what the Bureau's role was.

Mr. Wallach. What was that?

Mr. Swenson. Well, the Bureau was concerned, in my view, with Domestic Intelligence, and we were supposed to be concerned with foreign intelligence.

Mr. Wallach. We have heard testimony from other high level CIA officials stating that insofar as they were concerned, the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy was an FBI matter.

Was that ever told to you or discussed in your presence?

Mr. Swenson. I don't think anybody had to tell me, but I would assume that this was discussed at the time. It was certainly a matter of interest to me. I saw Sam Papich daily. I felt sure that it was primarily the Bureau's jurisdiction to investigate within the United States, yes, and my role would have been to see if there was anything that I

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1 could contribute from the standpoint of Cuban intelligence
2 connections,,or possible connections.
3 Mr. Wallach. But as your role vis-a-vis your normal
4 job, and any information you may have picked up, is that
5 correct?
6 Mr. Swenson. What do you mean by my normal job?
7 Mr. Wallach. Well, let me go back.
8 Did you ever receive, or are you ever aware of anyone
9 ever receiving in the CIA specific instructions to investigate
10 the assassination of President Kennedy?
11 Mr. Swenson. That has been asked before, and it has been
12 answered.
13 Mr. Wallach. Well, I'm asking it insofar as you are
14 concerned, was it ever issued anywhere?
15 Mr. Swenson. (Nods in the negative.)
16 Mr. Wallach. I take it you are not aware of any
17 investigation conducted by the CIA.
18 Mr. Swenson. And I don't specifically recall Whitten's
19 heading the particular group.
20 Senator Schweiker. Or Angleton?
21 Mr. Swenson. Or Angleton. I do recall making sure
22 that the information which had come to me or passed through
23 me, that there was nothing which had been left out.
24 Mr. Wallach. Did you tell Papich about AMLASH?
25 Mr. Swenson. I don't think so.

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Mr. Wallach. Do you know if Papich knew about AMLASH?

Mr. Swenson. I don't know.

Mr. Wallach. Is there a reason why you didn't tell him about AMLASH?

Mr. Swenson. I don't think that was the type of information which I would have discussed with him.

Mr. Wallach. Who might have discussed that type of information with him?

Mr. Swenson. Des Fitzgerald. Sam's normal contact within the Cuban task force or SAS was myself, but there were times when he talked to Des or Des talked to him.

Mr. Wallach. Do you know whether or not the Bureau at any time until recently knew about the AMLASH operation?

Mr. Swenson. I don't know. I would doubt it.

Mr. Johnston. Let me ask you just one last question, and I guess we've gone through pretty much your testimony about it and your concept. Let me restate what I think you have testified, and that is that at least in your mind, that you drew a connection, the possibility of a connection between the AMLASH operation and the assassination of President Kennedy.

Mr. Swenson. I wouldn't put it quite that way. What I meant to say was that without a specific recollection, that would tie the two together. My role was to consider all possibilities, and I think I would have considered that

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among others, but I don't recall anything specific relating or tying the two together.

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

Mr. Swenson. That they did not draw a connection?

Mr. Johnston. Yes.

Mr. Swenson. I couldn't quarrel with them, no.

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

Mr. Swenson. 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.

Mr. Johnston. But therefore you say it would not seem logical for them to testify they drew no connection.

Mr. Swenson. Well, I'm not saying that.

Mr. Peloquin. Let me just say that I think it is a semantic difficulty there.

Mr. Swenson. Plainly speaking, everybody's imagination is different. My job, I had many, many years in intelligence, going back to pre-Pearl Harbor, so perhaps I had a devious mind so I would consider such things. I think that many people just never considered it.

Mr. Johnston. Finally, let me ask you, knowing that CIA

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1 had a special group to investigate the Kennedy assassination,
2 I ask you how they could have conducted that investigation
3 thoroughly if, A, they didn't know about the AMLASH operation --
4 Mr. Swenson. I really can't respond because I can't
5 remember the group or what they did, or I can't recall any
6 with them about it.
7 Mr. Johnston. As a counterintelligence expert, could you
8 have conducted an investigation if you did not know about the
9 AMLASH operation?
10 Mr. Swenson. I think I would have considered it had I
11 had that role. I didn't have it.
12 Senator Schweiker. I gave you a wrong name there. How
13 about Raul Diaz, R-a-u-l, D-i-a-z, as a Cuban intelligence
14 agent.
15 Mr. Swenson. I think he might haveobeen, Senator. The
16 name sort of stirs a faint recollection.
17 Senator Schweiker. The name was incorrect before. There's
18 an allegation that he was at Dealey Plaza. If he were there,
19 pictured somewhere, would you attach much significance to it
20 or not?
21 Mr. Swenson. I wouldn't know, Senator, without knowing
22 more about his background. I'd have to see what sort of
23 relationship he had to Cuban intelligence.
24 Senator Schweiker. Did you ever hear of a Morris
25 Bishop or Bishop who was acting in some capacity with the

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exile group?

Mr. Swenson. Morris Bishop?

Senator Schweiker. Bishop or just Bishop as a code name or either the name of a Bishop or Morris Bishop?

Mr. Swenson. I don't recall.

Senator Schweiker. It doesn't ring any bell at all?

Mr. Swenson. (Nods in the negative.)

Mr. Epstein. What other assasination plots, if any, were you aware of against Castro that were being planned by the CIA other than AMLASH?

Mr. Swenson. I think that was the only one that I personally knew about at the time. I think there might have been one other. My stand was the same on this generally.

Mr. Epstein. Did the other one have the same security problem involved?

Mr. Swenson. I don't recall that it did. Really, I don't have any keen recollection of anything on this. If there were something significant that would have emerged, I would tell you because I would have remembered it.

Mr. Epstein. At any of the meetings or discussions that followed President Kennedy's assassination, was any concern ever expressed that an investigation of possible Cuban ties might result in exposing the CIA's plot to assassinate Castro?

Mr. Swenson. Absolutely not. I don't think any friend of

mine would have considered that at all. They wouldn't have cared.

Mr. Epstein. They wouldn't have cared if the CIA's plots to assassinate Castro were exposed?

Mr. Swenson. Not if that had a bearing on the assassination of the President. I'd say there was no attempt on the part of any people I knew to cover up anything which would be embarrassing, if that's what you're getting at.

Mr. Epstein. Well, my question also relates to your own operation in investigating possible connections.

Would --

Mr. Swenson. Had I found a connection, I would have surfaced it immediately.

Mr. Epstein. I understand, but in the decision as to what leads to set out or what breadth to give to the exploration of that issue, or what assets to contact, would not an issue involved in how broad to carry that be involved with the question of whether it would compromise an ongoing CIA operation?

Mr. Swenson. I suppose it would be an element. I try to consider everything if I'm doing it. But it would not have deterred me.

Mr. Epstein. Were the Agency personnel attached to the Miami office aware of the security problems involving AMLASH and the possibility that that Agency plot might have been compromised?

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Mr. Swenson. I can't recall specifically. Insofar as people located at the WAVE station who had any participation or connection with it are concerned, I would have seen to it that they were alerted concerning any misgivings I had.

Mr. Epstein. Would that haveincluded every person connected with WAVE station that was interrogating Cuban intelligence assets?

Mr. Swenson. Well, I wouldn't have gone to talk to everybody there, but there was a CI staff at the WAVE station which reported to the then Chief of Station at WAVE, and in a dotted line function reported to me, and I certainly looked at everything that they were doing, and when I had misgivings I would go there and express them.

Mr. Epstein. Do you remember discussing the possibility of the insecurity of AMLASH being the subject of discussion between you and the Chief of the WAVE station?

Mr. Swenson. I have no specific recollection.

Mr. Epstein. Did you have any contact with the Warren Commission?

Mr. Swenson. None.

Mr. Epstein. Do you recall who did?

Mr. Swenson. I do not.

Mr. Epstein. Was any requirement ever levied on you for information bearing on the assassination to be supplied to the Warren Commission?

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Mr. Swenson. Not that I can recall.

Mr. Wallach. Were you ever at any time learn or pick up knowledge that Castro might possibly have sent teams of persons into the United States, for sabotage missions or otherwise, in mid-'63 or late '63 in retaliation for the sabotage attempts against --

Mr. Swenson. Not in retaliation, no.

Mr. Wallach. Well, how about just for sabotage here?

Mr. Swenson. Well, I think he -- the teams which he sent in of which I am knowledgeable, were sent for the purpose of intelligence collection or penetration of anti-Castro groups within the United States.

Mr. Wallach. Were you ever aware, or are you aware that sometime -- I cannot recall the date, it was '61 or '62.

Mr. Epstein. '62.

Mr. Wallach. '62. they were run out of New York, which was later intercepted, caught by the FBI, that there was an assassination attempt being run by DGI and certain persons within the United States?

Is that a fair question?

Mr. Swenson. I think in 1962 we didn't know there was a DGI.

Mr. Wallach. Cuban intelligence.

Mr. Swenson. Well, what they used to call Cuban intelligence which was, you know, our knowledge early on was

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1 quite fragmentary. We learned about the Cuban intelligence
2 function [redacted]
3 whom I debriefed at great length, and I never got from him
4 anything which is germane to what we are discussing here.
5 Mr. Johnston. What was his crypt?
6 Mr. Swenson. [redacted]
7 Mr. Wallach. In any event, the FBI did through a well-
8 known Cuban in New York City, intercede and stop assassination
9 plots against certain of the anti-Castro leaders.
10 Was that ever called to your attention in '62?
11 Mr. Swenson. I can't recall that.
12 Mr. Epstein. Just one more general --
13 Mr. Swenson. It might have been prior to the time that
14 I went to the Counterintelligence group.
15 Mr. Wallach. Generally, can you describe for us from
16 your knowledge, what you know, if anything, about the Mafia
17 or Mafia-run operations in Cuba in '63?
18 Mr. Swenson. No knowledge.
19 Mr. Wallach. No knowledge?
20 Mr. Swenson. Absolutely none.
21 Mr. Epstein. Was that an issue that was ever considered
22 by your operation, the possibility, not for assassination
23 purposes necessarily --
24 Mr. Swenson. I had no knowledge of it at that time, and
25 I would not have looked on it with great favor anyway.

Mr. Epstein. You're saying your operation --

Mr. Swenson. I didn't know about it, had no connection with it, and I have no firsthand knowledge.

Mr. Epstein. And it was never considered as a method of counterintelligence activities by your --

Mr. Swenson. Not by me, no, or my staff.

Senator Schweiker. Well, we want to thank you very much.

I think we have pretty well exhausted ourselves. I hope you are not too exhausted, Mr. Swenson. We appreciate your cooperation in coming here this morning.

Mr. Swenson. Very glad to have been here.

(Whereupon, at 11:52 o'clock a.m., the interview in the above-entitled matter was concluded.)

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