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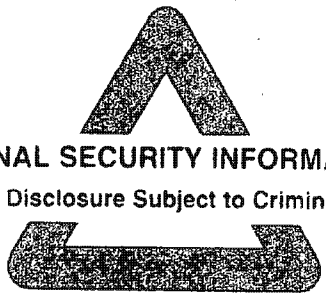
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11/25/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



WORLD REACTION TO
THE ASSASSINATION OF
PRESIDENT KENNEDY

25 Nov 1963
(Information as of 0700 EST)

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SC No. 12420/63

25 November 1963

WORLD REACTION TO THE ASSASSINATION
OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

(Information as of 0700 EST)

SUMMARY

Communist information media appear to be engaged in a widespread campaign to indicate that the killing of Lee Harvey Oswald is a cover-up to seal his lips and protect the extreme rightist circles whose tool or agent he must have been.

In the Free World, editorials and commentators are concerned that the killing will make it impossible to establish by normal process the responsibility and motivation for the assassination of President Kennedy. One South African newspaper notes that "lynch law" is not yet a thing of the past in the US.

Regarding the future implications of the change in the US presidency, the principal concern appears to be that there will be a slowing down of developments contributing to a US-Soviet detente. Some editorials expect temporary disruption of US participation in such organs as NATO and GATT. In Tokyo, a sharp stock market slump indicated uncertainty over the future.

Soviet, satellite and Cuban military activity remains at normal levels with the exception of the continued defensive military alert in Cuba. Both Castro and Guevara have warned publicly that Cuba can expect new attacks.

SINO-SOVIET ORBIT

Moscow continues to refrain from taking any actions which the US and the rest of the world could interpret as calculated to embarrass the US in the wake of President Kennedy's assassination. It appears that Soviet leaders have decided to avoid anything which could be regarded as unseemly pressures on US interests at this time. They are probably awaiting the presentation of President Johnson's program to assess the future course of US-Soviet relations.

Soviet commentators continue to express the hope that President Johnson will continue Kennedy's "realistic" foreign policy and will take further steps toward relaxing international tension. Pravda's Washington correspondent reports that "one often hears that Johnson will, on the whole continue Kennedy's policy." An Izvestia correspondent in the US goes even further and asserts that Johnson "is not regarded as a thick-headed southern Democrat. In particular, he carried on propaganda for the rather abridged program of struggle for the rights of Negroes put forward by Kennedy."

The slaying of Oswald yesterday was promptly reported in bloc media. Prior to his death, Soviet comment seemed to reflect fear that the accused assassin might in some way jeopardize US-Soviet relations. Now, Moscow is hinting at Dallas police-FBI collusion in the slaying of Oswald. Moscow pointedly notes that Oswald denied his implication in the assassination "till the very end" and has been "silenced forever." Moscow charges that the circumstances of the villainous murder of John Kennedy are being "intentionally confused" by "certain interested US circles." The new shots fired at Dallas, one commentator asserts, throw additional light on this monstrous crime. He goes on to predict that "sooner or later" the American people and world public opinion will learn the name of the "real assassin" of the late president.

A TASS dispatch datelined New York charged that "the murderers of President John Kennedy are trying to cover up their traces"; and suggests possible loopholes in the case against Oswald. The East German

news agency even more bluntly attributed the President's assassination to rightists and called the arrest and elimination of Oswald a "Fascist" cover-up. Pravda's New York correspondent and Communist newspapers in Rome and Paris took the identical line that Oswald was killed "to shut his mouth."

Peiping has found it easy to switch its attacks on President Kennedy to President Johnson. The Chinese Communist press portrays the new President as a "rich millionaire" who "represents the interests of big oilmen and ranchers in the south and big capitalists and industrialists in the north." He is said to be "consistently against Communism and workers." Peiping says Johnson "has given positive support to all Kennedy's reactionary policies in whose making and projection he participated." Reflecting Peiping's vicious anti-US attitude, one paper printed a gruesome cartoon on the assassination of President Kennedy.

An extreme leftist clandestine radio broadcasting to Turkey in Turkish says President Johnson is known for "reactionary tendencies" and that he "does not favor the policy of peaceful coexistence as much as Kennedy did." The broadcast said extremists supporting the Cold War "will now be further encouraged."

WESTERN EUROPE

The West European press continues to pay its tributes to President Kennedy. There is increasing speculation, however, on the future course of US foreign policy under President Johnson, and general concern that recent improvement in East-West relations may be stopped for the time being.

West Berlin Mayor Brandt, in his regular Sunday broadcast to Berliners expressed his confidence in President Johnson and future US policy on Berlin.

West German Foreign Minister Schroeder says that Chancellor Erhard attaches highest priority to personal contact with President Johnson as soon as possible. The US Embassy reports that Erhard is scheduled to visit Johnson on 15 January, and would be available to come to Washington either before or after that date.

Several British newspapers express some anxiety as to what course US policy will take. While most writers agree there will be no alteration in American foreign policy or in British-American relationships, there is widespread apprehension that development toward a US-Russian rapprochement will be slowed or halted.

The Sunday Times expects a period of hesitancy in NATO and GATT. The mass circulation Sunday Citizen believes NATO will mark time on proposals for a multilateral nuclear force (MLF). The Sunday Telegraph says the assassination has damaged US reputation as an orderly, stable and mature society and that it is impossible for Europe or Britain to consider handing over nuclear monopoly now to the US.

French and British television commentators following up coverage of the shooting of Oswald regretted that "there will always be doubt" now as to his guilt.

Finnish editorials speculating on the future, express confidence in the continuity of US foreign policy. While editorial estimates of President Johnson are mixed, there is a general agreement that the former Vice President has gained much experience and enjoys general confidence in both domestic and foreign policy.

LATIN AMERICA

Cuban fears that the assassination of President Kennedy would create a new wave of anti-Cuban sentiment in the US were reflected in a 24 November speech by Industries Minister Ernesto (Che) Guevara. He blamed the assassination and the murder of Oswald on reactionary forces. Guevara warned Cubans that a new, tougher policy against Cuba would be forthcoming from the US. "Everything indicates that in the next months and years world peace will be threatened by the most unscrupulous, ferocious, and warlike monopolistic oligarchy--and with the most murderous potential--that the history of humanity has ever known," Guevara said.

The murder of Oswald, according to a Havana radio broadcast of early 25 November, is further evidence of a reactionary plot to stir up anti-Cuban emotions among the American people. The broadcast cited similar views expressed by the London Sunday Times, Pravda, and the New York Times.

Several trade unions in Argentina issued statements of condolence on President Kennedy's assassination, at least six of them blaming "reactionary factions" and "right-wing monopolies."

Reporting from Chile, the Cuban Prensa Latina correspondent cited the right-of-center Radical Party newspaper as linking Cuba with the assassination. The leftist newspapers, according to the same correspondent, are blaming the radical right.

ASIA AND AFRICA

Little new reaction has been reported from Asia and Africa during the past 24 hours. Most comment continues to include expressions of hope that the late President Kennedy's policies regarding world peace and human rights will be continued by President Johnson. There has been no reported reaction to the Oswald murder, except from the Union of South Africa.

Egyptian radio commentary expects President Johnson to follow the late President's course, but anticipates he may find the obstacles which obstruct this course more difficult.

The influential Japanese news organ Asahi reiterates previously reported Japanese fear that little progress will be made in improving East-West relations during the next year. It calls on other countries of the world to support and cooperate with the United States, however, and particularly requests the USSR to "continue to place trust in the American people who supported the late President's policies and continue to pursue the policy of peace and coexistence." The Tokyo stock exchange experienced heavy selling and a sharp drop in prices when it reopened on 25 November, and its directors reportedly expect a further drop in prices because of uncertainty about the policies of the Johnson administration.

President Azikiwe of Nigeria has struck almost the only sour note yet reported, calling the assassination of President Kennedy a setback in the struggle for fundamental human rights which demonstrates that some Americans still hate black men. He queries whether the UN should remain in the United States and asks whether African nations should not now look elsewhere for leadership in the cause of social justice. The US Embassy in Lagos notes that President Azikiwe is on tour in remote parts of Nigeria and probably has limited access to reliable information.

In South Africa, the Rand Daily Mail terms the killing of Oswald "lynch law," implying that lynchings are not yet a thing of the past in the US.

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