

SYLVIA DURAN'S PREVIOUS STATEMENTS RE LEE HARVEY OSWALD'S  
VISIT TO THE CUBAN CONSULATE IN MEXICO CITY

On November 23, 1963, one day after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station suggested to Mexican officials that they arrest Sylvia Tirado de Duran. (Mexi 7029 to the Director, Nov. 23, 1963; Note to Luis Echevarria, November 23, 1963) The Mexico City Station asked that Sylvia Tirado de Duran be held incommunicado until she told the Mexican officials everything she knew about Lee Harvey Oswald. The Mexican government arrested Sylvia Tirado de Duran the same day. Captain Fernando Gutierrez Barrios, Assistant Director of the Federal Security Police, interrogated her at 6:00 p.m. that evening. (CE 2121, p. 35)

A. Version of Interrogation Given to the Warren Commission  
By The Mexican Government

Ms. Duran stated that she became secretary to the Consul, Eusebio Azcue, three months prior to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, due to the death of Maricarmen Olivari. (Ibid. p. 37) She stated that in late September or early October of 1963 a North American by the name of Lee Harvey Oswald appeared at the Cuban Consulate and applied for an intransit visa to Russia by way of Cuba. (Ibid. p. 39) Duran stated that Oswald presented

Central Intelligence Agency  
has no Objection to Release

Date: AS SANITIZED

180-10142-10301 2003

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presented evidence that he had been in Russia for three years, that he was married to a Russian woman and also that he was the leader of an organization in New Orleans called "Fair Play for Cuba." Sylvia Duran stated that Oswald stressed that his visa application should be accepted as he was a friend of the Cuban Revolution. (Ibid. p. 39) Sylvia Duran stated that there, in compliance with her duties, she had Oswald fill out the appropriate application (Ibid. p. 39). Oswald then left and returned in the after-noon with the necessary photographs. (Ibid. p. 39) Ms. Duran stated that at that time, exceeding her duties, she telephoned the Russian Consulate because of her interest in facilitating the handling of the Russian visa for Lee Harvey Oswald. (Ibid. p. 39) The Russian Embassy told Duran that there would be a delay of approximately four months in processing the case, which annoyed Lee Harvey Oswald since, according to his statements, he was in a great hurry to obtain a visa to travel to Russia. He insisted on his right to obtain a visa in view of his background and activities on behalf of the Cuban movement. (Ibid. p. 39) When Oswald understood that it was not possible to give him a Cuban visa without previously obtaining a Russian visa, he became extremely angry. (Ibid. p. 39)

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At this point Ms. Duran stated she called Consul Azcue, who, at that time was in his private office accompanied by his upcoming replacement Alfredo Mirabal. (Ibid. p. 40) Mr. Azcue came out of his office and argued with Oswald in English. (Ibid. p. 40) Ms. Duran stated that Mr. Azcue told Oswald that a person like him instead of aiding the Cuban Revolution, did it harm. (Ibid., p. 40) Oswald at that point stated that he had two reasons for requesting his visa with such urgency: one, that his Mexican permit expired soon; and two, that he needed to reach Russian soon. (Ibid., p. 40) Sylvia Duran stated that in spite of the argument she gave Oswald a piece of paper with her name and Consulate business phone number (11-28-47) (Ibid., p. 40) Ms. Duran stated that she also initiated the handling of his visa application by sending it to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations, from which a reply was received in the normal manner some fifteen to thirty days later approving the issuance of an intransit visa on the condition that he previously obtain a Russian visa. (Ibid. p. 40) Mrs. Duran stated that she does not recall whether Oswald subsequently called her on the Consulate phone number which she had given him. (Ibid. p. 40) Sylvia Duran stated that all the conversations that Eusebio Azcue and she had with Oswald were in the English language since

Oswald did not speak any Spanish. (Ibid. p. 40) Finally, she stated that upon seeing Lee Harvey Oswald's photograph in the newspapers, she immediately recognized and identified it as being the same person that she remember as Lee Harvey Oswald. (Ibid. p. 40)

At the time of Sylvia Duran's detainment her pertinent statements about Lee Harvey Oswald were written by the Mexican government and given to Mrs. Duran to read and sign.

B. Original Signed Statement of Sylvia Duran Interrogation  
By the Mexican Government

Upon learning about the assassination she and her husband speculated that President Kennedy might have been assassinated for racial reasons. When she became aware that the assassin was Lee Harvey Oswald, she ascertained that it was the same man that approximately two months prior had been to the Cuban Consulate to solicit an intran-sit visa to Russia. Having taken his name from the special documentation he presented she knew that he was married to a Russian woman and belonged to the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee." She checked the data in the Consulate archives and became certain that it was the same individual who was blonde, short, dressed unelegantly and whose face turned red when agry. The Consul had denied the visa because to

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obtain an intransit visa from the Cuban government, it was imperative that he previously obtain a visa from the Soviet Consulate. Since obtaining a visa from the Soviets took four months and Oswald's Mexican visa expired soon Oswald became excited and Duran had to call the Consul who had an argument with him. The only aid she could give Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul, and calling the person in charge of that office. The Soviet official told her that they would have to consult Moscow which would take four months. That afternoon, Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate and Sylvia Duran confirmed that he could get a Cuban visa only after he received a Russian visa. She gave Oswald her name and business phone number but never gave him her address because she had no reason to give it to him. She knew that phoning the Soviet Consulate was not one of her duties and that if she did so she did it only to help Oswald. She gave Oswald her business phone number only because he would have to call subsequently to check whether he had obtained a visa. He never called back. (Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473).

Sylvia Duran was released November 24, 1963 and rearrested November 27, 1963, when the Mexican government alleged that she was attempting to leave Mexico and travel

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to Havana. (Cable from Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, Mexi 7104, CIA #482; Cable from Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, Mexi 7101, CIA #493). The Mexican officials told Sylvia Duran that they were detaining her to protect her. (HSCA Staff Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78 p.--- JFK Document No. )

Subsequently about her second detainment, Duran stated, "They were very rough this time...they repeated the same questions but they were more, how do you say, evil. And they...wanted to know exactly what I have done in Cuba, the people that I met there, everything. They were asking me questions about all the people that were working the Embassy and this time I wanted to go to the bathroom and they wouldn't let me and it was longer, because it was from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (HSCA Staff Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78 p. JFK Document No. )

According to the Mexican officials that detained Duran a second time she remembered Oswald perfectly and denied he wore glasses. Otherwise there was no addition to her story. (Cable from Mexico City Station to Director, December 12, 1963, Mexi 7364, CIA No. 557-558).

C. House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of  
Sylvia Duran 6/6/78

Sylvia Tirado Bazan told the House Select Committee on Assassinations staffers the following:

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Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate three times September 27, 1963, not twice as the Warren Commission previously reported. (HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. p. ) Oswald first visited the Cuban Consulate at approximately 11:00 a.m., requesting an intransit visa to Cuba with Russia as the final destination. Oswald showed her some documents, then, left to obtain photographs needed for his application. (HSCA interview of Sylvia Dura, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. ps. 523-526)

He returned at approximately 1:00 p.m. with four photographs. (HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document # p. 526) Ms. Duran typed the application in duplicate, stapled a picture on top of each and had Oswald sign each in her presence. (HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. # , p. 527-8) As proof Oswald showed her special documents he had brought: his Russian labor card, marriage certificate with the name of his Russian wife, his American Communist Party membership card and his "Fair Play for Cuba" membership card. (HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. # , p.531) Ms. Duran stated that she found Lee Harvey Oswald's behavior suspicious because normally a Communist traveled only with his passport because belonging to the Communist

Party was illegal in Mexico in 1963. (HSCA interview: Ibid p. 533) There was a procedure whereby the American Communist Party would arrange visa matters for their members with the Cuban Communist Party. (Ibid. p.532-533) The American would then come to Mexico, visit the Cuban Consulate and receive his visa immediately. (Ibid., p.533) When Duran asked Oswald why he did not have the American Communist Party arrange his trip to Cuba he stated that he did not have time. (Ibid., p.532)

Duran explained to Oswald that he had to acquire a Russian visa before he could receive a Cuban visa. (Ibid., p.534) Duran jotted her name and business phone number on a piece of paper and gave it to Oswald who then left to get his Russian visa. (Ibid., p.549, 534)

Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., which was after normal working hours, 10:00 to 2:00 p.m. (Ibid., p. 543) The guard called her stating that someone who did not speak Spanish was at the gate inquiring about a visa. (Ibid., p.543-4) As routine procedure, she asked the guard to escort the individual to her office. (Ibid. p.544) Oswald told her that he had acquired a Russian visa. (Ibid., p. 544) Since he did not produce it when asked she called the Russian Consulate. (Ibid., p.545) The Consul told Duran



that Oswald had been to the Consulate requesting a visa and had been told that the reply would take approximately four months. (Ibid., p.545) When she relayed the message to Oswald he got very excited, insisting that as a person who had been in jail because of the Cuban Revolution he should receive a visa. (Ibid., p. 546) Oswald stated that he could not wait a long period of time because his Mexican visa expired in three days. (Ibid., p. 546) At this point Ms. Duran called the Consul, Eusibio Azcue, who was in his office accompanied by his upcoming replacement, Alfredo Mirabal. (Ibid., p. 546) Azcue politely explained the requisites for an intransit visa to Oswald. (Ibid., p.. 546, 554) When he noticed that Oswald was a stubborn man he told Oswald that he was obviously not a friend of the Cuban Revolution, because if he was a friend he would understand that Cuba had to be extremely careful with the people it allowed in Cuba. (Ibid., p. 554) Azcue and Oswald yelled at each other. (Ibid., p. 551) Then Azcue went to the door, opened it and asked Oswald to leave. (Ibid., p. 554) Oswald did not revisit or telephone the Consulate because if he had she would have remembered it. The Consulate did not have many American visitors who had been to Russia and had married a Russian

woman visit their offices to get a visa and then get into an argument with staff personnel.

HSCA INVESTIGATION OF SYLVIA DURAN'S ACCOUNT OF LEE HARVEY  
OSWALD'S VISIT TO THE CUBAN CONSULATE IN MEXICO CITY

To investigate Sylvia Duran's account of Lee Harvey Oswald's visits to the Cuban Consulate the Committee sought the cooperation of the Cuban Government. The Committee traveled to Cuba twice interviewing most of the Cuban employees at the Cuban Consulate and Embassy in Mexico City in September 1963. (See Procedural Writeups Cuba Trips 1 and 2) Only two individuals remembered Oswald, Eusebio Azcue Lopez and Alfredo Mirabal Diaz. Only Eusebio Azcue personally dealt with Lee Harvey Oswald. Alfredo Mirabal could only state that he never doubted that the Lee Harvey Oswald who visited the Consulate was the same Lee Harvey Oswald shot by Jack Ruby in the basement of the Dallas Police Department. that he caught only glimpses of him. (HSCA Interview of Alfredo Mirabal Diaz, p. ; also

For this reason, only Eusebio Azcue Lopez and Sylvia Tirado Bazan's accounts will be dealt with in detail.

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After interviewing Sylvia Duran and Eusebio Azcue the Committee has found conflicting stories. Ms. Duran told the Committee that Lee Harvey Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate on three occasions, all on September 27, 1963. (HSCA Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 523) This contradicts her statement to the Mexican officials that Oswald had visited the Consulate on two occasions, both on September 27, 1963. (See section entitled Version of Interrogative Given to the Warren Commission by Mexican Government.) (Also, see section entitled Original Signed Statement of Sylvia Duran Interrogation by the Mexican Government.) Though neither report quotes Tirado as stating that Oswald's visits were on September 27, 1963, she states that they occurred on the same day in late September or early October. (Ibid.) When the House Select Committee on Assassinations checked Oswald's visa application, the date September 27, 1963 was clearly marked on it. (See Oswald Visa application.)

Mr. Azcue remembered three visits to the Cuban Consulate occurring on different dates. Mr. Azcue stated that Oswald's first visit would have been "one or two days prior to the date on the visa application at around 1:00 p.m." (HSCA Interview of Eusebio Azcue, , JFK

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Document No. , p. 3) Mr. Azcue stated that Oswald probably returned to the Consulate the following day "at approximately the same time that he came on his first visit" (Ibid., p. 4) with his photographs--"probably that same day listed on the (visa) application, the 27th of September." (Ibid., p. 3) Azcue stated that Oswald left to get a Soviet visa and probably returned to the Cuban Consulate one day after he had filled out the visa. (Ibid., p. 6 (Tape 2)) Mr. Azcue stated that it was then that he had the argument with Oswald. (Ibid., p. 6 Tape 2)

Ms. Tirado stated that Oswald first visited the Cuban Consulate at approximately 11:00 a.m. requesting an intransit visa to Cuba with Russia as the final destination. Oswald showed her some documents and then left to obtain photographs needed for his application. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 20-23)

Consul Eusebio Azcue stated that Oswald's first visit to the Cuban Consulate was "one or two days prior to the date on the visa application at around 1:00 p.m. (HSCA Interview of Eusebio Azcue, , JFK Document No. , p. 3)

Ms. Tirado stated that Oswald returned at approxi-

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mately 1:00 p.m. with four photographs. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 23) Azcue stated that Lee Harvey Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate about 1:00 p.m. with the photographs "probably that same day listed on the visa application, the 27th of September." (HSCA Interview with Eusebio Azcue, JFK Document No. , p.3) This is the Oswald visit Ms. Tirado had never mentioned before or had mentioned but had never been reported before. (See above.) Ms. Tirado stated that she typed Oswald's visa application in duplicate, stapled a picture on top of each and had Oswald sign each in her presence. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 24, 25) As proof Oswald showed her special documents he had brought with him: his Russian labor card, marriage certificate with name of Russian wife, his American Communist Party membership card and his "Fair Play for Cuba" membership card. (HSCA, Ibid., p. 28); See also, C.E. p. 39; See also, Original Signed Statement of Sylvia Duran Interrogation by the Mexican Government, Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473).

Ms. Tirado stated that she found Lee Harvey Oswald's behavior suspicious because normally a Communist travelled only with his passport because belonging to the Communist

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Party was illegal in Mexico in 1963. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK

Document No. , p. 30) Consul Eusibio Azcue also stated that he found LHO's behavior suspicious. (HSCA Interview of Azcue, Ms. Tirado stated that there was a procedure whereby the , JFK Document # p. 5) American Communist Party would arrange visa matters for their members with the Cuban Communist Party. (Ibid., p. 29, 30) The American would then come to Mexico, visit the Cuban Consulate and receive his visa immediately. (Ibid, p. 30) When Duran asked Oswald why he did not have the American Communist Party arrange his trip to Cuba he stated that he did not have time. (Ibid., p. 29) Ms. Tirado told the House Select Committee staffers that she had stated this to the Mexican officials. They had a stenographer present during the entire interrogation. (Ibid., p. 93) The Mexican officials never passed the information to the American authorities.

Ms. Tirado stated that she explained to Oswald that he had to acquire a Russian visa before he could receive a Cuban visa. (HSCA Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. ; Warren Commission Exhibit 2121, p. 39; Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473) Duran jotted her name and business phone number on a piece of paper, gave it to Lee Harvey Oswald. (HSCA Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. # , p. 46; Warren Commission

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Exhibit 2121, p. 39; Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473) who then left to get his Russian visa. (HSCA Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. # , p. 31; HSCA Interview of Eusebio Azcue, , JFK Document No. , Tape 2 p. 6)

Ms. Tirado stated that Lee Harvey Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate late in the afternoon after working hours which were between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 37) The Committee has conflicting testimony concerning Lee Harvey Oswald's third visit. Consul Eusebio Azcue stated that the third Oswald visit probably occurred one or two days after he had filled out the visa application. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Eusebio Azcue, , JFK Document No. , Tape 2 p. 6)

Ms. Tirado stated that the guard routinely called her saying that someone who did not speak Spanish was at the gate inquiring about a visa. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. pp. 37-38) Per routine procedure she asked the guard to escort the individual to her office. (Ibid., p. 38) Oswald told her that he had acquired a Russian

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visa. (Ibid., p. 38) Since he did not produce it when asked she called the Russian Consulate. (Ibid., p. 39)

The Mexican government's official report to the Warren Commission stated that when Oswald came back with the photographs, Ms. Duran exceeding her duties telephoned the Russian Consulate because of her interest in facilitating the handling of the Russian visa for Lee Harvey Oswald. (Warren Commission Exhibit 2121, p. 39) The report given by the Mexican officials to the Central Intelligence Agency after their initial interrogation stated that the only <sup>Sylvia</sup> aid/Duran could give Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul and calling the person in charge ~~of~~ that office. (Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473)

Ms. Duran stated that she had been irked when the Mexican government reported to the Warren Commission that by calling the Russian Consulate she had exceeded her duties. (Ibid., p. 91) Consul Eusibio Azcue stated that if Ms. Tirado wanted to phone the Russian Consulate she was authorized to do it. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Eusebio Azcue, , JFK Document No. , Tape 2, p. 4) Ms. Tirado stated that the Russian Consul told her that Oswald had been to the Consulate requesting a visa and had been told that the reply would take approximately four months. (House Select



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Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 39; Warren Commission Exhibit 2121, p. 39; Blind Memo re Lee Harvey Oswald and Sylvia Duran, November 26, 1963, CIA #473) Ms. Tirado stated that when she relayed the message to Lee Harvey Oswald he got very excited, insisting that as a person who had been in jail because of the Cuban Revolution he should receive a Cuban visa. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 40); Warren Commission Exhibit 2121, p. 39) Ms. Tirado stated that Oswald said that he could not wait a long period of time because his Mexican visa expired in three days. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. 40; Warren Commission Exhibit 2121, p. 39) Ms. Tirado stated that at this point she called Consul Eusebio Azcue, who was in his office accompanied by his upcoming replacement Alfredo Mirabal. (Ibid., p. 39) Consul Eusebio Azcue does not recall that the sequence of events occurred in this manner. (See above.) Ms. Tirado stated that Consul Eusebio Azcue politely explained the requisites for an intrasit visa to Oswald. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Sylvia Duran, 4/6/67, JFK Document No. , p. 39, 47)

When Azcue noticed that Oswald was a stubborn man he told Oswald that obviously he was not a friend of the Cuban Revolution, because if he was a friend he would understand that Cuba had to be extremely careful with the people it allowed in Cuba. (Ibid., p. 47) Ms. Tirado stated that Azcue and Oswald yelled at each other. (Ibid. 44) Azcue then went to the door, opened it and asked Oswald to leave. (Ibid. 47)

Ms. Tirado stated that Oswald did not revisit or telephone the Consulate because if he had she would have remembered it. She stated that the Consulate did not have many American visitors who had been to Russia and had married a Russian woman attempt to get a Cuban visa and then get into an argument with staff personnel. (Ibid. p 51)

Lee Harvey Oswald's number of visits to the Cuban Consulate on September 27, 1963 are not of major substantive importance. The importance lies in Lee Harvey Oswald's visit to the Cuban Consulate after visiting hours. (10-2) Ms. Duran told House Select Committee on Assassinations staffers that Lee Harvey Oswald made his third visit to the Consulate late afternoon around 5:00 p.m. (HSCA Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. p. 543) In 1963, Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station

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surveilled both the Cuban and Soviet Diplomatic compounds electronically. From the electric surveillance of the Soviet Embassy the Central Intelligence Agency learned of the following two conversations:

At approximately 4:05 p.m. <sup>(what date?)</sup> Sylvia Duran called the Soviet Embassy. She told the person at the Embassy that an American citizen seeking a visa was at the Cuban Consulate. Sylvia explained that the American citizen wanted to know the name of the official he had dealt with at the Soviet Embassy. Sylvia had sent the American to the Soviet Embassy stating that his acquiring a Cuban visa was contingent on his previously acquiring a Soviet visa. Sylvia explained to the Soviet official that the American had stated that he was assured that there would be no problem. At that point, the Soviet official put another official on the phone, causing Sylvia to repeat the story. The official then asked Sylvia to leave her name and number to call her later. This conversation was also in Spanish. (Classified Staff Summary of Review of CIA Documents, 3/9/78, pp. 6-7; Cable from Mexico to the Director, 11/23/63, MEXI 7025; CIA Transcript from Russian Embassy, 9/27/63.)

At 4:26 p.m. an unidentified Soviet official called Sylvia Duran inquiring whether the American citizen had been to the Cuban consulate office. Sylvia responded

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affirmatively, stating that the American was at the office at that time. The Soviet official told Sylvia that when the American visited the Soviet Consulate office he had displayed papers from the Soviet Consulate in Washington. He also had a letter stating that he was a member of an organization that favored Cuba. The American wanted to go to the U.S.S.R. with his Russian wife and remain there a long time. The Soviet official had not received an answer from Washington to the American's problem. The problem traditionally took four to five months to resolve because Washington had to secure authorization from the U.S.S.R. The Soviet official added that the American's wife could get a visa in Washington very quickly and she could have it sent anywhere but that he felt that the American would not get a visa soon. Sylvia said that the Cuban government could not give the American a visa because he had neither friends in Cuba nor authorization (?) for a visa from the U.S.S.R. The Soviet official added that the Soviets could not give the American a letter of recommendation because they did not know him. This conversation was also in the Spanish transcripts. (Classified Staff Summary of Review of CIA Documents, 3/9/78, pp. 7-10; Cable from Mexico City to the Director, 11/23/63, MEXI 7025; CIA Transcript from Russian Embassy, 9/27/78.)

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These two phone calls were summarized by Sylvia Duran when she stated that she called the Russian Consulate who said that Oswald had been told that the reply from the Soviet Union would take approximately four months. (See Version of interrogation given to the Warren Commission by Mexican Government; Original signed statement of Sylvia Duran Interrogation by the Mexican government; and HSCA interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. ) Ms. Duran failed to mention that the Soviet official took her number and called her back. The Committee attributes Ms. Duran's neglect to mention the call from the unidentified Soviet--probably the Soviet Consul--to forgetfulness, since she has consistently stated the substance of the conversation. (Ibid.)

Mr. Azcue stated that he understood that the Soviet Consul called him but "maybe a secretary called the Soviet Consul and then the Soviet Consul called me, that's possible. (HSCA interview of Eusebio Azcue, JFK Document No. , Tape 2, p. 11) Mr. Azcue's statement does not explain the Friday, September 27, 1963, 4:26 p.m. call because it was Sylvia who spoke to the Soviet Consul. (See September 27, 1963, 4:26 p.m. call.) Azcue states that he spoke to the Soviet Consul. The Committee has never seen a transcript of this phone call. One of four explanations is possible: 1) The Soviet Consul called Azcue

on the line. At first, the American spoke in Russian and the Soviet spoke English. The conversation then proceeded in English until the Russian discontinued it, and put another Soviet on the line. The Soviet spoke in English but the American, in broken Russian, asked him to speak Russian. The conversation resumed in Russian at that point. It also became incoherent and is thus quoted in its entirety:

Russian: What else do you want?

American: I was just now at your Embassy and they took my address.

Russian: I know that.

American:--speaks terrible, hardly recognizable Russian. I did not know it then. I went to the Cuban Embassy to ask them for my address, because they have it.

Russian: Why don't you come again and leave your address with us? it is not far from the Cuban Embassy.

American: Well, I'll be there right away.

(Classified Staff Summary of Review of CIA Documents, 3/9/78, pp. 10-12; CIA Transcript from Russian Embassy, 9/28/63).

The Committee feels that there is a possibility that the American Sylvia Duran put in contact with a Soviet official on Saturday, September 28, 1963, was Lee Harvey Oswald. The American citizen had previously visited the Soviet Consulate and called from Sylvia Duran's office on a Saturday when the guard never allowed visitors into the Cuban compounds. (Ibid. p. 549)

The Committee feels that Sylvia may have lied about an Oswald visit to the Cuban Consulate on Saturday, September 28, 1963, for either of two reasons: 1) Ms. Duran did not wish to disclose that Oswald had visited the Cuban Consulate again after his argument with Consul Eusebio Azcue and that she had decided to aid him; 2) Ms. Duran may have had personal reasons. Elena Garro de Paz reported that she attended a "twist party at Ruben Duran's house which Oswald, accompanied by two other American young men, also attended." (See write-up.) Elena also reported that Duran had an affair with Lee Harvey Oswald. (Ibid.) The Committee attempted to locate Elena Garro de Paz who might have shed some light into this area. (See Elena write-up.) If Sylvia Duran did in fact have an affair with Lee Harvey Oswald, he might have visited the Consulate on Saturday and Sylvia would have denied it.

The Committee also feels that there is a possibility that the man Sylvia put on the phone with the Soviet official on September 28, 1963 was not Oswald. The man Duran

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put on the line spoke broken Russian. George De Mohrenschildt, Marina Oswald and George Bouke all stated that Oswald spoke a very refined Russian and that he preferred speaking Russian to English. (Note: String Cites:

Nonetheless, Ms. Duran lied to the Committee about the guard not allowing visitors into the Cuban compound on Saturdays as the electronic surveillance files for September 28, 1963 illustrate.

When Eusebio Azcue and Sylvia Tirado were asked to describe Lee Harvey Oswald, both gave similar descriptions of him that are not even remotely close to Oswald's physical appearance. Consul Azcue stated that the man who visited the Consulate looking for a visa differed from HSCA JFK Exhibit No. as follows: his nose was more aquiline; his eyelashes were straighter; his hair was blonde; his height was between five feet six and five feet seven; he was between 35 and 37 years of age; his cheeks were sunken; and, he had a cold look in his eyes. (House Select Committee on Assassinations Interview of Eusebio Azcue, , JFK Document No. , pp. 19-21) Consul Eusebio Azcue further stated that the man who came to the Cuban Consulate requesting an intransit visa and the person that Jack Ruby assassinated at the Dallas



police station--which he saw on television--were different persons. (Ibid. p. 18)

Ms. Tirado stated that the person that visited the Cuban Consulate and the person she saw Jack Ruby assassinate at the Dallas police station were the same person. (HSCA Interview of Sylvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document No. , p. ) Yet, when Ms. Tirado describes the (alleged) Lee Harvey Oswald that visited the Cuban Consulate, the man does not really bear any resemblance to Lee Harvey Oswald. Ms. Tirado stated that Lee Harvey Oswald was approximately five feet six, had blonde hair, weighed about 125 pounds, had small eyes, smaller fingers than Ed Lopez (HSCA staffer) and did not have very much hair. (Ibid. p. 96)

Since neither description resembles Oswald the Committee has determined that there is a possibility that the man who visited the Cuban Consulate was not Lee Harvey Oswald. It is difficult to justify the above since the House Select Committee Handwriting Panel has determined that the signature on the visa application matches other samples of Lee Harvey Oswald's signature. There is a possibility that a man who claimed that he was Lee Harvey Oswald picked up an application, took it to Lee Harvey Oswald who filled it, <sup>cut</sup> attached pictures, signed it and then returned to the Cuban Consulate once again impersonating him. The

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Committee considers this a possibility because when the Committee staffers asked Duran if she would ever have allowed a person to take the application out of the Consulate, fill it out, attach a photo, sign them and then return them to the Embassy she answered affirmatively.

(Ibid. p. 31) (Also no photos materialized.) The one problem with this possibility is that Ms. Tirado stated that she thinks Lee Harvey Oswald signed the visa application in her presence. (Ibid. p. 33)

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CIA Handling of Sylvia Duran Matter  
President

When/John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, the United States investigative agencies -- FBI, CIA, Secret Service, etc.--were asked to investigate the assassination. When the Central Intelligence Agency learned that Lee Harvey Oswald had visited Mexico City between late September and early October they reviewed their files and found in the electronic surveillance files phone calls to the Soviet Embassy made September 27th, September 28th, and October 1st. that could have been made by Oswald. (See Electronic Surveillance Section.) They also found phone calls between the Russian Consul and Sylvia Duran where Oswald appeared to be discussed. (See Soviet Electronic Surveillance Section.) In addition they found a phone call made by Sylvia Duran to the Soviet Consulate on September 28, 1978, where Sylvia Duran stated that there was an American citizen at the Cuban Consulate who had previously visited the Soviet Consulate, and put a man on the line. (See Soviet Electronic Surveillance Section.) A final phone call where Oswald identified himself was also found. (See Soviet Electronic Surveillance Section.)

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At this point the Central Intelligence Agency determined that it would ask the Mexican Government--whom it had a good relationship with--to arrest Sylvia Duran because she might shed some light on the circumstances surrounding the assassination. Sylvia Duran was also a Mexican citizen and did not have diplomatic immunity. The Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station sent a note to Luis Echevarria requesting that he arrest Sylvia Sylvia Tirado de Duran immediately. The agency stated that she was a Mexican citizen who had put Oswald in touch with the Soviet Embassy. The agency gave Echevarria a note with Duran's address, her mother's address, her brother's address, her license plate number, her home phone number and her place of work. The Mexico City Station also suggested that Duran be held incommunicado until she could be questioned on the matter. (Note to Luis Echevarria to arrest Sylvia Duran, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 444; Cable re oswald-Duran, Mexi 7029, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 441; Anne Goodpasture Chronology, Wx 7241, entry 36, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 635)

The request to Luis Echevarria was not authorized by the Central Intelligence Agency's Headquarters. When they received the cable on November 23, 1963, Headquarters

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feared that the ~~co~~vert surveillance operations might be endangered. Jack Whitten, stationed at Langley Headquarters, telephoned Winston Scott, the Mexico Chief of Station asking that Sylvia Duran not be arrested. Scott told Whitten that it was too late, that he could not recall the request and that Headquarters should already have received a cable which stated that Luis Echevarria had already been told to arrest Sylvia Duran, as a Mexican initiative. (Note written by Chief of Station re phone call with Jack Whitten, November 23, 1963; Chronology prepared by Anne Goodpasture, WX 7241, entry 37. November 23, 1963, CIA No. 635) Winston Scott then telephoned Luis Echevarria and stated that the agency hoped that Sylvia Duran's arrest would be kept absolutely secret, that all information received from Duran <sup>had</sup> ~~got~~ cabled to Washington immediately through the Mexico City Station and that her arrest and statements not spread to any leftist groups. (Chief of Station phone call to Luis Echevarria, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 440; Flash Cable from Karamersinis to Mexico City Station, November 23, 1963, DIR 84916, CIA No. 403; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, entry 46, November 23, 1963, CIA No. 636).

discovery  
The Central Intelligence Agency feared/that Americans were behind the arrest of Sylvia Duran. It would endanger their continuing covert surveillance operations. For this reason the Mexico City Station requested the Mexicans to arrest Sylvia Duran on their initiative. Similar logic dictated when Headquarters asked the Mexico City Station to request the Mexican authorities to interrogate Sylvia Duran to the extent necessary to clarify the outstanding points raised in their cables the previous forty-eight hours. Headquarters stated that the Mexico City Station could provide questions to the Mexican interrogators but that they wished no Americans to come in contact with Duran. (Cable CIA Headquarters to Mexico City Station, November 27, 1963, DIR 85318, CIA No. 497; chronology of Anne Goodpasture, November 27, 1963, entry no. 121, CIA No. 653) When on November 27, 1963, the Mexico City Station sent a photostatic copy of Sylvia Duran's ten page signed statement to Headquarters (Cable Mexico City Station to Headquarters, November 27, 1963, Mexi 7105, CIA No. 479; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, November 27, 1963, entry no. 127, CIA No. 656) the following day Headquarters sent a clarification cable to the Mexico City Station. Headquarters wanted to insure that neither Sylvia Duran nor the Cubans got the impression

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that the Americans were behind her rearrest. The cable stated "We want the Mexican authorities to take the responsibility for the whole affair." (Cable from Headquarters to the Mexico City Station, November 28, 1963, DIR 85371, CIA No. 464; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, November 28, 1963, WX7241, entry no. 141, CIA No. 658)

When the Central Intelligence began to deal with the Warren Commission, Headquarters cabled the Mexico City Station that their present plan in passing information to the Warren Commission was to eliminate mention of telephone taps in order to protect their continuing operations. Headquarters stated that they would rely on Sylvia Duran's statements and on the Consular files which the Soviets gave the State Department. Headquarters stressed that exact, detailed information from [ O / ] and [ O / ] (Penetration agents in the Cuban Embassy) on just what Sylvia Duran and other officials said about Oswald's visits and his dealings would be valuable and usable corroborative evidence. (CIA cable from Headquarters to Mexico City Station, December 21, 1963, DIR 90466, CIA No. 549; Chronology of Anne Goodpasture, December 21, 1963, Entry No. 268, CIA No. 682)

Prior to three Warren Commission staffers (Messers. Willins, Slawson and Coleman) visit to Mexico City in

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April 1964 the Agency still felt that if an American contacted Sylvia Duran their covert continuing operations might be endangered. Headquarters cabled the Mexico City Station that one of the touchy subjects that the staffers would discuss was whether they should talk to Sylvia Duran in Mexico at the Consulate. (Cable Headquarters to Mexico City Station, April 8, 1964, DIR 13026, CIA No. 698) Headquarters further cabled that the Warren Commission staffers knew that the Central Intelligence Agency had tap assets and that they might have guessed from the coverage that they had photo points and a source in the Cuban Embassy but that they did not know the details on the Agency's arrangements with [ 24 ]. Headquarters stressed that the Chief of Station should lend them all the needed assistance with the minimum possible disclosure of assets and techniques. (Ibid.)

At this point the House Select Committee on Assassinations has determined that the Central Intelligence Agency thought their continuing electronic surveillance operation extremely sensitive and important. The Warren Commission would have needed to disclose sensitive information to contradict Sylvia Duran's story. The Central Intelligence Agency had input into what could go in the Warren Report. (See Chuck Berk Write-up.)