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SECRET

Summary: Pre-Assassination; Mexico

Russian Embassy Transcripts

A. General Observations

1. The name of the Embassy appears at the top of the first page of each transcript. (Transcript here means one day's coverage on one phone.) This is followed by the number of the phone covered (a series of three two-digit numbers). The next line gives the date of the coverage. The next line gives the tape reel number.

On some of the transcripts, this is followed by the time period (hours) covered by the transcript. On most of the transcripts, the site to where the conversation is on the reel appears on the left-hand column opposite the referenced conversation. Generally, the time the conversation occurred, and a notation as to whether it is an incoming or outgoing call, appears at the beginning of the conversation.
2 Generally, the transcripts appear to be paraphrases of the conversations rather than literal transcriptions. This is more true of the Spanish than the English transcripts. Some of the conversations in Spanish, and most of the English (Russian) ones, appear to be literal transcriptions.

3 There are some transcripts in Spanish. In these transcripts there are references to those places on the tape where a conversation appears in Russian. These conversations appear later, transcribed into English.

4 In the English transcripts (conversation had been in Russian and/or English) the phrase "previously transcribed" often appears after a cite to the tape footage number. These conversations are not in the transcripts.
examined. Ed and I did a careful cross-referencing check of all transcripts for a three day period to try to find those conversations denoted as "previously transcribed." Our check failed to turn up any of those conversations. When asked about this, Russ Holmes said that he knew nothing about it. He suggested talking to Anne Goodpasture about it.

5. Marginal comments are not infrequent in the English transcripts. The comments seem to be of two types, both of which are set off from the text by slash marks. The first type seems to cover those instances when the translator/transcriber is unsure of a word, identity or place. In this type, the comment consists, generally, of a word or name followed by sometimes a question mark (?)
The second type is longer comments on the conversation and cover a more general area. These are usually preaced with the word "Comment." Some examples:

a. notation of alarm in a participant's voice;
b. comments on the mental relationship of a Russian Embassy official (based on the observation that the official always speaks in a condescending tone to his wife);
c. identifying a caller as the same as a man in a previous conversation;
d. substitutions for literal transcriptions, i.e., a note saying there is an argument without transcribing the argument;
e. comments on intonation;
f. notes of background conversations;
g. comments on participant's ability to speak the language.
6. Ed noted that the Spanish in the transcripts is very poor.

7. The transcripts for September 15 + 16, if there are any, are not on the microfilm we examined. When asked about this, Ross Holmes said it was probably because those days were a Saturday and Sunday and the intercept was shut down on those days. These are transcripts for every day between September 15 and October 3 inclusive.

II. Information from the transcript of September 27, 1963.

1. A man calls the Soviet Military Attaché, looking for a visa to Odessa. He is referred to the consulate. He asks how to get to the Embassy and is given directions. This conversation is in the Spanish transcript and appears to be a paraphrase.
This conversation occurred between 10:30 and 10:50 A.M.

2. At 10:37 a man calls the Soviet Consulate and asks for the Counsel. He is told that the Counsel is not in. The man outside says that it is necessary for him to get a visa to Odessa. The person in the Embassy asks him to call back at 11:30. This is in the Spanish transcripts.

3. At 1:25 a man calls the Consulate and asks for the Counsel. He is told that he (the Counsel) is not in. The man outside asks, “When tomorrow?” The Consulate official tells him between 4:00 and 5:00 on Mondays and Fridays. This is in Spanish.

4. At approximately 4:05 p.m. Sylvia Suan calls the Soviet Embassy. She tells the man there that the American citizen was there at the Cuban Embassy.
the one who wants a visa to Cuba in transit to Russia. Sylvia says that he wants to know who he talked to at the Soviet Embassy because she had sent him these saying that if he got a Soviet visa that he could then get a Cuban one and all they would have to do was notify Immigration. The man at the Cuban Embassy seeking the visa as wants to know who he spoke to at the Soviet Embassy because he was assured that there would be no problem. The man at the Soviet Embassy puts another man on the phone and Sylvia goes through the same thing with him. He tells her to leave her name and phone number and says he will call back. This transcript is in Spanish.

5. At 4:26 an unidentified Soviet Consulate Special calls.
Sylvia Duran: The Soviet official (hereinafter SO) asks her if the American has been there. Sylvia responds that he is there now. The SO says that the American showed papers from the Soviet Consulate in Washington, D.C. and that he wants to go to the USSR where he plans to stay for a long time with his wife who is Russian. The SO says that he has not received an answer to this man's problem from Washington and it traditionally takes four to five months. The SO says that, unless they have permission from the USSR, they can't issue a visa without getting permission from Washington. However, the SO says, the man has a letter showing that he is a member of an organization that favors Cuba, but the Cubans can't give him a visa without him first getting a...
SECRET

Soviet visa and the SO doesn't know what to do with him now because they should wait for an answer from Washington. Silvia agrees and says that it is doubtful that the Cubans will give him a visa because he doesn't know anyone in Cuba and that would be a problem because he wanted to wait in Cuba while his Soviet visa was being processed and he knew that would take quite a while. The SO says that his wife could get a visa in Washington very quickly and she could have it sent anywhere. But the SO doesn't think that they will get the visa or permission soon. Silvia says it is clear that they can't give him a letter because they don't know if the visa will be approved. The SO says that they only give visas.
when it is appropriate. Silvia says that that is what she will put down on the forms. The SO says that they can't give him a letter of recommendation because they don't know him. Sorry to bother you, Silvia. No problem. This transcript is in Spanish.

8. September 28, 1963. (Saturday): Silvia Susan calls the Soviet Consulate at 11:51 A.M. She says that there is a North American there who had been at the Soviet Embassy before. The SO asks her to wait one minute. (Proceeding in Spanish, following in English).

"/Please see the Spanish transcription/ WS while waiting speaks in English to someone in the background. He said wait. Do you speak Russian? Yes. Why don't you talk to him? I don't know. /MS takes the phone and says in broken Russian/ I was in
your Embassy and spoke to your counsel. Just a minute. MI takes the phone and asks MO in English what does he want.

MO: /in Russian/ Please speak Russian.

MI: What else do you want?

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

MI: I know that.

MO: /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...

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

MO: I'll be there right away."

The Spanish transcript indicates that the MO first spoke Russian, the MI responded in English, and then they...
both spoke in English. The transcript in Oswald’s Mexican file is a carbon.

C. October 1, 1963.

1. At 10:31 a.m. a man calls the Soviet military attaché:

“Mo to MI, in broken Russian.

Mo: Hello, sir. I was at your place last Saturday and I talked to your consul. They said they’d send a telegram to Washington and I wanted to ask you if there was anything new?

MI: I’d like to ask you to call another phone number.

Mo: Please.

MI: Please write it down: 15-6045 and ask for a consul.

Mo: Thank you.

MI: Please.”

(English transcript)

2. A man calls the consul later. There is not a time on the transcript. A chronology of the Mexico City investigation (WFCFTH, Vol. I) places
this call at 10:45 AM. The Oswald Mexican file has a xerox copy of the English transcripts: "I met (sic) (2) ms/the same person who phoned a day or so ago and spoke in broken Russian/speaks to Obyedkov:

Lee: Hello, this is Lee Oswald (phon) speaking, I was at your place last Saturday and spoke to a consul, and they said that they’d send a telegram to Washington, so I wanted to find out if you have anything new? But I don’t remember the name of that consul.

OBY: Kostikov. He is dark/hair or skin?/

Lee: Yes, my name is Oswald.

OBY: Just a minute I’ll find out. They say that they haven’t received anything yet.

Lee: Have they done anything?

OBY: Yes, they say that a sequel
has been sent out, but nothing has been received as yet.

I.E.S. And what...?/Obv hangup/
"The one subsequent and two prior conversations are designated "previously transcribed.""

On October 3 a man calls the Soviet Military Attache and speaks in broken Spanish and then English. The MI asks for a visa for Russia and is asked to call the Consulate at 15-60-55. After being given the number, the MI asks "They issue the visa there?" and the MI says he doesn’t know anything about and says call the consulate (English transcript).

III. Info from the transcripts in Oswald’s Mexico file:
A. 9/27; 10:37 call - "Zero" copy
B. 9/27; 4:26 call - ""
C. 9/27; 4:05 call - ""
D. 9/27: 7:26 call; carbon copy taped to another page.
1. Portions underlined in red (not on Xerox).
2. Scott writes: "Is it possible to identify?"
3. Routed to Blood pasture and Shaw.
4. Duran added with "Silvia."
5. Filed in Soviet contact and Oswald file - date of filing instructions or other notations not indicated.

1. Parts underlined in red.
2. Routed to Scott, Blood pasture and Shaw.
3. File instructions to Soviet contact file.
4. No dates indicated.
5. "1"

1. Parts underlined in red.
2. "1"
3. Routed to Scott, Blood pasture.

5. No date.

G. 10/1: 10:31 call: Knox

H. 10/1: "XXX (?)" call: 11

I. 10/3:

J. I have requested the "Soviet Contacts" file from Barbara and am attempting to locate any other carbon or original copies of transcripts. Russ Holmes says that if the carbons file then they probably don't exist.

IV. Information from cable traffic to and from Mexico City, Oswald's Mexican file, and his HQ's 201 and WX-7241:

A. On 10/1/63 Mex 6344 to HQ reports that Dave Phillips is on TDY in Washington, D.C.

B. Mex 6384, dated 10/3/63, subject: undetermined, is missing from the cable chronology.

C. DIR 72527, dated 10/4/63, says: "Mr. David Phillips, newly appointed Chief in Cuba..."
Mexi will arrive 7 Oct [in Miami] for two days consultation WAVE... For Mexi: Mr. Phillips ETA Mexi 9 Oct...."

October 1 + 4, 1963.


2. WX-7241, apparently prepared in 1967, also places the date of these photos on 1+4 October as does post-assassination cable traffic and Mexi 4543 which refers to an unidentified man entering the Embassy on one October.

3. Russ Holmes recently informed me that the correct dates are 2 and 4 October.
E. On 8 October 1963, Mefi 6453, was sent to H.Q. It originated with Barbara Manell. The Authenticating Officer (A.O.) was Barbara Manell, and the Releasing Officer (R.O.) was Ann Scott. The cable reports Oswald’s call to Obyedkov on 22 Oct. It states that he had been there on the 28th, and the inquiry and response about the telegram. The second paragraph says: “Have photos male appears be American entering Sovemb 13:16 hours, leaving 12:22 on 1 Oct. Appearance age 35, athletic build, circa 6 feet, receding hairline, balding top. Wear khakis and sport shirt.” There is no routing slip on this cable.

F. HQ responded to Mefi 6453 with DIR 74830 (7-2) on 10 October 1963. This cable originated with Charlotte Burkes, A.O. was J.C. King and the R.O. was Thomas Kameshins. This cable provides a summary of
lito info on Oswald indicating his DOB, date of defection, description, his return to the U.S., and his marriage. It says that the stay in the USSR "clearly had a maturing effect on Oswald." It reported that the last info received by HQ was a May 1963 memo that reported that it had been determined that HQ was still a U.S. citizen and that he and his family had been given visas to return to the U.S. Mexico was instructed to pass Oswald's DOB, fact of defection, and description to the FBI, Navy, INS and the Embassy locally. HQ said that it was passing the info in Mex 4453 and theident data to FBI, State, Navy, INS, HQ's. This cable calls him "Lee Harvey Oswald." The routing slip in the Mexican files indicates that this cable went to Booth, White, Goodpasture, Manell, "Paul," and D.'s.
"We should ask HQ for photo No?"
Barbara Manell noted that the local dissemination was done on 15 October. Scott requested that a "P" file be opened on Lee "Harry" Oswald and put all data we have into it. Photos?

G. On 9 October 1963 Myriam 6468 informed HQ that Myriam urgently needed new tape recorders for Tanasoff, Flouyan, Randolph, Hasty and anyone else identified person. The cable reported that the machines used by these people were constantly breaking down and that transporting them for repairs was a security problem.

H. The October 10th HQ dissemination

Orig: C. Bustos; R.O.: Jane Roman (CI Liaison); A.O.: L.N. Gallery (C/WH/R); Coordinated in draft by "CI/SIG/Egester" and "SR/CI/RM." The cable was sent to the Department of State and Navy and the FBI. The first paragraph of the cable says: On Oct
1963 a reliable and sensitive source reported that a man who identified himself as Lee Oswald, contacted the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City inquiring whether the Embassy had received any news concerning a telegram which had been sent to Washington. The American was described as approximately 35 years old, with athletic build, about six feet tall, with a receding hairline. The cable goes on to say that it is believed that the man is identical to Lee Henry Oswald and gives his full information. (OIR 74673, dated 10/10/63.)

J. On 10/15/63, Mex. 6534 was dated Orig + A.O.: Herbert Manell.
R.O. Men Scott

ref: OIR 74830
It said: "Pls. pouch photo. Oswald. I have not found a response to this cable in either the Mexico-cable traffic chronos or Oswald's Mexican file. I have asked Russ Holmes.
to provide the dispatched materials to and from Mexico between the dates of 10/13 and 10/26. He said that this might not get all the requested materials because HQ sometimes used what he called "an unattributable pouch." This cable does not have an 5 attached.

K. Cable originating with T. WARD (WH/3/Mexico) on 23 Oct. 1963. It was sent on the 24th.

Ref: OIR 74673.

"It is requested that you forward to this Office as soon as possible two copies of the most recent photograph you have of [Lee Harvey Oswald]. We will forward them to our representative in Mexico, who will attempt to determine if the Lee Oswald in Mexico City and subject are the same individuals."

2. On 16 October 1963, Mr. Scott wrote a memo to the Ambassador's counter with the Novemb
It reported that the information was from a very sensitive, usually reliable source; that a man ID'ing himself as Lee Oswald had contacted the Soviets on 1 October; that he had previously contacted them on 28 September; that he had talked to Kostikov about a reply to his request; CO's ODB; his defection; and a promise to pass on any additional info obtained (9-5 FOIA). The memo says, in part:

"This office determined that Oswald had been at the Soviet Embassy on 28 September 1963 and had talked with Valeriy Vladimirovich Kostikov, a member of the consular section, in order to learn if the Soviet Embassy had received a reply from Washington concerning his request. We have no clarifying..."
Information with respect to this request. 
The original of this memo went to:
The Ambassador
The Minister
Counselor for Political Affairs
Regional Security Officers
copies to:
Legat
Naval Attaché
I+N+S
Osvaldo "P"
50-2-4-1 (written over 1)
Liaison with Legat
""Naval Attaché.

IV Info from photo production
and log, and Cubenbéro taps.
Russ Holmes tells me he is
having trouble locating these
documents but will make
them available if and when
he can find them.