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Discussions between Warren Commission and CIA

31 January 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 31 January 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel:

"Thank you for your memorandum of January 25, 1964, transmitting a detailed chronology of Lee Harvey OSWALD's stay in the Soviet Union and the alphabetical list of persons in the Soviet Union who were known to or mentioned by Lee Harvey OSWALD or his wife.

"Based on an initial review I am confident that this material will be of great assistance to the work of this Commission. However, I have a question regarding the mention of an appendix in the Name List. For example, there are references to 'Appendix B' under items No. 70 and No. 91. I would appreciate knowing whether one or more appendices have been prepared to the materials which can be made available to this Commission."

31 January 1964 :

Letter to Mr. J. Edgar HOOVER, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, dated 31 January 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"We understand you already have furnished the Central Intelligence Agency with the Summary Report entitled 'Investigation of Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, November 22, 1963', and accompanying exhibits; the Summary Report entitled 'Investigation of Killing of Lee Harvey OSWALD, Dallas, Texas, 24 November 1963'; and the two Supplemental Reports to these summaries. At a conference on January 28, 1964, attended by Mr. MOLLEY and representatives of the Secret Service and the Central Intelligence Agency, we discussed the possibility of supplying additional reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to the Central Intelligence Agency in order to enable that agency to be of further assistance to the Commission. It was agreed that F.B.I. reports would be made available to C.I.A. and that representatives of the two agencies would consult regarding the precautions to be taken in the use of these materials.

"Accordingly, the Commission would appreciate your furnishing the C.I.A. (Attention: Mr. Richard HELMS) copies of the following reports:

" . . .

"All correspondence carried on by Lee Harvey OSWALD with persons in the Soviet Union, in particular, the letters referred to on page 63 of your Supplemental Report on the Assassination of President Kennedy.

"As additional materials in these general areas are developed by the Bureau in the course of its investigation, we would like the reports to be furnished to the Central Intelligence Agency. — . . . "

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10 February 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 10 February 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"This will acknowledge with the thanks of the Commission your memorandum dated January 31, 1964, relating to information developed by your Agency on Lee Harvey OSWALD activity in Mexico City during the period of September 28 to October 3, 1963.

"I assume - and would like to be so advised if the contrary is the fact - that your January 31, 1964, report is not final inasmuch as I recall an investigation is currently being pursued with respect to an allegation of some significance which emanated from the White House and which is not referred to in the above-mentioned report. With respect to this allegation, it would be greatly appreciated if you would furnish us with an interim resume of any developments pertinent thereto.

"In connection with your memorandum dated January 31, 1964, the Commission has asked me to request you to submit to the Commission the following:

(There follows twelve requirements.)

12 February 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Thomas H. KARAMESSINES, Acting Deputy Director for Plans, dated 12 February 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"After your conversation with Mr. WILLENS on Monday, February 10, 1964, the Commission was supplied by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with a cropped copy of the photograph reportedly displayed to Mrs. Marguerite OSWALD on November 23, 1963, at Dallas, Texas, by Special Agent ODUM of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"In order to complete the records of the Commission regarding this matter, the Commission would like to be informed of the circumstances surrounding the obtaining of this picture by your Agency and the identity of the individual shown, if this information is currently available."

12 February 1964 :

Letter to Honorable John A. McCONE, Director, Central Intelligence Agency, dated 12 February 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"As you know, this Commission . . .

"We are informed by the Secret Service that the Central Intelligence Agency has disseminated several reports or communications concerning the assassination to the Secret Service in the period since November 1963. All these materials reportedly carry s

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security rating which precludes their delivery to the Commission by the Secret Service. I would appreciate your assistance in sending copies of these reports or other materials to the Commission as soon as possible.

"In addition, I would like your Agency to supply the Commission with a report on the information in your possession regarding Lee Harvey OSWALD prior to November 22, 1963. Some of this information is provided in the footnote on Page 2 of your report dated January 31, 1964, entitled 'Information Developed by CIA on the Activity of Lee Harvey OSWALD in Mexico City 28 September - 3 October 1963'. The footnote indicates that until early October of 1963 the contents of this file consisted entirely of press materials and disseminations received from the Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Navy Department. It would assist this Commission if a copy of the contents of the file as of November 22, 1963, would be made available. If not reflected in the file, we are also interested in knowing what dissemination, if any, was made to other Federal agencies, of items added to the file after October 9, 1963 and prior to November 22."

6 March 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 6 March 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"The Commission has recently received a report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation covering an interview that took place between representatives of the Bureau and the recent Soviet defector, Yuri Ivanovich NOSENKO.

"It appears to us that NOSENKO's defection, whether or not it is authentic, is of very great interest to the Commission. I would like to set up a conference early in the week of March 9 between members of the Commission staff and members of CIA to discuss this matter further and to explore generally the work your Agency has in progress of interest to this Commission.

"Will you please contact me at your earliest convenience to set a time for this conference."

12 March 1964 :

Memorandum for the Record, dated 12 March 1964;
Subject: Meeting with the Warren Commission on 12 March 1964.

"On 12 March 1964, Mr. HELMS, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. ROCCA met with Mr. RANKIN, Chief Counsel for the Warren Commission, Mr. WILLEMS, and other members of Mr. RANKIN's staff. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the current status of the CIA contribution to the work of the Warren Commission.

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"2. The first topic raised by Mr. RANKIN concerned information on Lee Harvey OSWALD's stay in the Soviet Union as reported by the FBI, based on their interview of the defector, Yuriy Ivanovich NOSENKO. This discussion is reported in a separate memorandum.

"3. . . . Mr. RANKIN's staff showed us a detailed memorandum they had prepared based on all of the information available to them, including our own contribution concerning OSWALD's stay in the USSR. . . .

"4. Members of Mr. RANKIN's staff then spoke about having found a book in OSWALD's possessions which had certain letters cut out giving the impression that this might have formed the base or key for a cipher system. . . .

"5. Members of Mr. RANKIN's staff then commented on the testimony of Mrs. OSWALD to the effect that the letters from her son regarding his desire to return to the United States had the appearance of being dictated since they contained none of his usual grammatical errors and used legal language with which he would not have been familiar. . . .

"6. Mr. WILLEMS noted that Mrs. OSWALD had introduced a statement to the effect that she suspected her son to be a CIA agent. . . .

"7. A considerable part of the meeting from this point forward consisted of a review by Mr. RANKIN and his staff of the gaps in their investigation to date. . . .

"8. In connection with the Mexican phase of the investigation, members of Mr. RANKIN's staff questioned Mr. HELMS and Mr. ROCCA regarding the extent of the CIA file on OSWALD for the period 8 October to 22 November 1963. . . .

"9. The question of why no action was taken by other agencies of the government after their receipt of CIA information that OSWALD was in contact with the Soviet and Cuban Embassies in Mexico City was next discussed. . . .

"10. The Commission, Mr. RANKIN said, would be interested in any information held by CIA on Jack RUBY. . . .

"11. Mr. HELMS was then asked if CIA had done any follow up to its original telegraphic dissemination of the information on OSWALD's visits to the Cuban and Soviet Embassies in Mexico City. Mr. HELMS replied that there had been no CIA action following our initial dissemination. Mr. WILLEMS then asked if there were any liaison problems faced by CIA in its efforts to deal with other agencies in matters affecting internal security. . . .

"12. Mr. WILLEMS then asked if CIA's intelligence collection system was automated. . . .

"13. In speaking of the broader question of protection for the President, Mr. RANKIN asked about our procedures for working with the Secret Service when the President travels abroad. . . .

"14. Mr. WILLEMS asked if we could check on a

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memorandum sent to Mr. KARAMESSINES on 12 February regarding one of the pictures identified by Mrs. OSWALD as that of Jack RUBY. . . ."

16 March 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 16 March 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"During our conference of March 12, we discussed informally several questions concerning Presidential protection, which I would like to put informally to obtain any comments your Agency may desire to make.

"First, at the time of the assassination, did the Central Intelligence Agency have any written description of the criteria to be employed by its personnel in determining what information coming to their attention should be furnished to the Secret Service? If not in a written form, was there any general policy with respect to this matter?

"Second, has the Central Intelligence Agency any recommendations to make regarding possible improvements in any aspect of Presidential protection, whether or not involving matters within its jurisdiction, including intelligence arrangements and procedures, liaison among federal agencies, particular protection measures, and any other aspect which appears relevant?"

16 March 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 16 March 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"I would like to confirm our understanding of the arrangements agreed upon at our conference on March 12, respecting the furnishing to the Commission of certain materials to complete your response to the request of our letter of February 1964.

"As we understand it, you will supply a paraphrase of each report or communication described in the second paragraph of our letter of February 12, 1964, with all indications of your confidential communications techniques and confidential sources deleted. You will also afford members of our staff working in this area an opportunity to review the actual files so that they may give assurance that the paraphrases are complete.

"The same procedure would be followed with respect to any materials described in the third paragraph of our letter of February 12, 1964, which have not hitherto been furnished because of similar security considerations. In addition, we will be furnished actual copies of disseminations on October 10, 1963 to other federal agencies regarding information on OSWALD's activities in Mexico City, and any other materials not already furnished and within the scope of the third paragraph of our letter, which do not present security problems requiring paraphrasing.

"if these arrangements are satisfactory to you, I would appreciate your advising Howard P. WILLENS or Samuel A. STERN for our staff when it would be convenient to have them visit your Agency to review the files involved."

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17 March 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 17 March 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"At the conference held in my office last Thursday, March 12, we agreed to forward to you certain documents. Those documents accompany this letter and they are as follows:

"1. Three ring loose-leaf notebook containing a file entitled "Lee Harvey OSWALD and Marina OSWALD, Documentary Record of Contacts with the United States Department of State and the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

"2. Copies of letters written by Lee Harvey OSWALD to his mother, Marguerite OSWALD, when he was living in the Soviet Union.

"3. Memorandum dated March 12, 1964, subject: Certain Questions Posed by the State Department Files.

"4. Copy of an undated draft of a letter found among Lee Harvey OSWALD's effects after the assassination, believed to be an initial draft of the letter sent by him to the Russian Embassy, in Washington, D. C., on or about November 12, 1963."

26 March 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 26 March 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"Enclosed is a letter received by the Commission from the Federal Bureau of Investigation dated March 19, 1964, and various enclosures which set forth the results of a recent investigation by the West German Federal Intelligence Service.

"The Commission would appreciate your analysis of this material. If you believe that additional investigation is appropriate, we would appreciate your initiating the appropriate action through the facilities of your Agency."

30 March 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 30 March 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"By cover letter dated March 23, 1964, the Federal Bureau of Investigation delivered to the Commission 28 reports and memoranda setting forth the results of the investigation concerning George and Jeanne de MORENSCHILDT requested by this Commission. These reports confirm that the present residence of the de MOHRENSCHILDTs is in Haiti and that they have travelled extensively in prior years throughout Mexico and Central America. The Commission would appreciate your furnishing a report from your Agency setting forth

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any information currently in your files regarding these subjects."

2 April 1964 :

Memorandum for the Record, dated 2 April 1964, by Raymond G. ROCCA, Chief, CI/R&A; Subject: Meeting with Representative of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, 27 March 1964, Langley.

"1. I talked with Mr. Samuel A. STERN regarding the Commission's interest in original Agency materials on Friday, 27 March 1964, from 2:30 to 4:00. . . .

"2. Mr. STERN hewed closely to the guidelines which had been established between Mr. HELMS and Mr. RANKIN: he read - or asked to read - only papers that had a bearing on the summarized information that had already been forwarded to the Commission. In the course of the discussion, he viewed the following specific items of original Agency documentation:

"a. DIR-74673 dated 18 October 1963 to State, FBI, and Navy reporting contact with Soviet Embassy, Mexico, by American, Lee OSWALD. (Forwarded to Commission under cover of DDP memo, No. 4-1554, dated 24 March 1964.)

"b. MEXI-7019 (IN-66846) dated 22 November 1963 re photos of unidentified American entering Cuban Embassy on 15 October 1963. (To Commission under cover of DDP memo, No. 4-1555, dated 24 March 1964.)

"c. MEXI-7020 (IN-66891) dated 23 November 1963 which forwarded names of three persons possibly identical with OSWALD who flew from Mexico to U. S. in November 1963. (To Commission under cover of DDP memo, No. 4-1555, dated 24 March 1964.)

"d. MEXI-7021 (IN-66896) dated 23 November 1963 indicating that FBI agent hand-carrying photos of person suspected of being OSWALD to Dallas for mailing to D. C. (To Commission under cover of DDP memo, No. 4-1555, dated 24 March 1964.)

"e. Six photos mailed to Washington, referred to in paragraph 2.d. above. (There was no discussion as to how the photos were acquired.)

"f. Copies of the three informal, undated disseminations handcarried to the Secret Service based on 2.b., c, and d above.

"g. DIR-84915 dated 23 November 1963 to the FBI re activities of North American, possibly identical with OSWALD, who visited Soviet and Cuban Embassies in Mexico on 28 September 1963. (To Commission under cover

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of DDP memo dated 31 January 1964, p. 8.)

"h. Originals of the thirty documents from CIA's dossier on OSWALD which were forwarded to the Commission under cover of DDP memo, No. 4-1224, dated 6 March 1964. (See attachment to that memo for inventory of documents.)

"i. Machine run sheets on documents accessioned to CIA's dossier on OSWALD.

"3. Mr. STERN stated he had a keen interest in Agency programs for electronic data handling of information. I pointed out to him the up-dated machine control record on the contents of the OSWALD file, and suggested that I was sure that Mr. HELMS would be pleased to offer him and others in the Commission the possibility of viewing the Agency's data processing mechanisms. It was also noted that a considerable effort had already been made by Mr. HELMS' subordinates to interest members of the intelligence community in an interagency approach to the machine control of counterintelligence and security information. A presentation had been made before the ICIS on this matter and an article had been prepared for Studies in Intelligence. I promised to make a copy of the article available to Mr. STERN.

"4. Mr. STERN was eager to view our actual mechanisms for machine control of our information and readily accepted the suggestion that a briefing take place. It was indicated to him that he would be contacted by CI Staff's Machine Records Officer who would arrange the details for the presentation in the near future.

"5. Mr. STERN volunteered one point in the discussion that the Agency handling of the information in the OSWALD case was unique among what the Commission had found had happened in every other agency. He was critical of the Navy. He raised specifically the question: why had the Navy not forwarded the photograph of Lee Harvey OSWALD requested by the Agency? He added that there were six or seven other points on which the Navy had been gipped by the Commission and there would be discussion between him and the Navy in the near future. He stated flatly that no Federal component except CIA had been able to show the Commission hard documentation which indicated there had been immediate action on field reported information by headquarters and full instructions for follow-up. Mr. STERN tended to equate this performance to the way we handled our data and for that reason placed great emphasis upon what the Commission might be able to do in its report for an improved methodology based on machines among departments and agencies involved in security matters."

13 April 1964 :

Memorandum for Deputy Director for Plans, dated 13 April 1964, by David E. MURPHY, Chief, SR Division; Subject: Discussions with Mr. Allen W. DULLES on the OSWALD Case.

"1. At the instructions of the DDP, I visited Mr. DULLES on 11 April to discuss with him certain questions which Mr. DULLES feels the Warren Commission may pose to CIA. Mr. DULLES explained that while the Commission wished to clarify certain aspects of the OSWALD case in which a response from CIA seemed necessary it

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was not sure how the questions should be posed nor how CIA should respond. Mr. DULLES hoped that our discussions would enable him to advise the Commission on this matter. He first raised the allegation that OSWALD was a CIA agent. He mentioned two sources for this accusation. One was Mrs. Marguerite OSWALD, Lee Harvey OSWALD's mother, and the other was Mr. Mark LANE, Mrs. OSWALD's attorney. . . .

"2. Mr. DULLES then suggested that the response to this question could be in the form of sworn testimony before the Commission by a senior CIA official or a letter or affidavit. He recalled that the Director of the FBI had replied by letter to a similar question. In any event, Mr. DULLES felt that the reply should be straightforward and to the point. He thought language which made it clear that Lee Harvey OSWALD was never an employee or agent of CIA would suffice. We should also state that neither CIA nor anyone acting on CIA's behalf was ever in contact or communicated with OSWALD. . . . I agreed with him that a carefully phrased denial of the charges of involvement with OSWALD seemed most appropriate.

"3. The next question concerned the possibility of OSWALD's having been a Soviet agent. Mr. DULLES suggested that the Commission's question on this matter be phrased somewhat as follows: 'In the knowledge or judgement of CIA was Lee Harvey OSWALD an agent of the Soviet intelligence services of the intelligence services of other communist states at any time prior to 22 November 1963, or was OSWALD solicited by these intelligence services to become such an agent?' . . . Mr. DULLES and I felt that it would be better to . . . confine our response to a precise statement of fact. This statement, in Mr. DULLES' view, could note that CIA possessed no knowledge either gained independently or from its study of the materials supplied by the Commission tending to show that Lee Harvey OSWALD was an agent of the Soviet intelligence services, or the services of any other communist country, or for that matter of any other country.

"4. . . .

"5. . . . Mr. DULLES mentioned other issues which concerned the Commission. He remarked that members of the Commission could not understand why CIA had not begun an investigation of OSWALD as soon as it received word that he had defected. I noted that this question had been discussed with Mr. RANKIN and his staff and there seemed to be considerable [mis]understanding of the practical circumstances which made it impossible for CIA to undertake such investigation inside the USSR. I expressed the hope that it would not be necessary for CIA to place matters of this sort in the public record. Mr. DULLES agreed.

"6. Mr. DULLES then asked if it were normal for the Soviet Government to permit a Soviet woman to marry a foreigner and then allow her to leave with her husband shortly after the marriage. This question perturbed the Commission and they would like to have an answer. I said that . . . the problem seemed to lie more in the consular field and I suggested that the best way to obtain an opinion on what constituted 'normal practice' in marriage cases in the USSR would

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be to question the Department of State. Mr. DULLES agreed.

"7. . . . I did offer a personal opinion in regard to the way in which CIA should respond. Noting that testimony on questions such as these would be difficult to insert in the public record, I suggested that it would be best if the CIA response were in written form. However, much will depend on the form in which the questions are eventually put to us and I imagine that a final decision can be made at that time.

"8. . . . "

21 April 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 21 April 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"On behalf of the Commission I would like to thank you and your representatives for the fine cooperation which was extended to representatives of the Commission during the course of their work in Mexico City from April 8 through April 13, 1964. . . .

"During their stay in Mexico City the Commission representatives discussed with Mr. SCOTT and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation that portion of the Lee Harvey OSWALD investigation which concerned Gilberto ALVARADO Ugarte. . . .

"Upon review of our complete file on this matter, we find that we lack full documentation of the investigation conducted of these allegations. It would be helpful if our records could be supplemented by a report from your Agency supplying more details regarding the investigation undertaken by your Agency and other concerned agencies into this matter and your evaluation as to the truth of ALVARADO's assertions. In particular, it would be helpful if a report could be submitted by the expert who conducted the polygraph examination which emphasizes the specific conclusions which he made based on the responses by ALVARADO in answering key questions on this matter."

22 April 1964 :

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 22 April 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"Throughout the course of the investigation . . .

"The Commission would like to know whether your Agency possesses any information not hitherto disclosed to this Commission concerning the association of Lee Harvey OSWALD with any communist or subversive organizations or individuals either in the United States or abroad, or with any criminals or criminal groups either in the United States or abroad.

"The Commission is anxious to be assured that it possesses the full extent of your Agency's knowledge and information concerning the aforementioned associations of Lee Harvey OSWALD."

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24 April 1964

Letter to Mr. Richard HELMS, Deputy Director for Plans, dated 24 April 1964, from J. Lee RANKIN, General Counsel.

"As an aid to testing the reliability of information we possess on Lee Harvey OSWALD's dealings with the Cuban and Soviet Embassies in Mexico City in late September and early October of 1963, the Commission would like to have as much information as can be obtained regarding the hours at which these two embassies are open to the public, their normal working hours for other purposes, and the procedures and regulations, whether formal or informal, involved in issuing Cuban visas or other permits to travel to or through Cuba. In addition, we would like to have a description of the procedures and regulations enforced by the Mexican authorities, whether formal or informal, in connection with travel by Americans to and from Cuba through Mexico.

"We are advised by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, from which agency representatives of the Commission requested this information in Mexico City, that your agency is in a better position to respond to this request."

5 May 1964 :

Memorandum for the Record, dated 5 May 1964; Subject: Meeting with Mr. SLAWSON of the Presidential Commission.

"1. On 5 May, Mr. WHITTEN and Mr. HALL met with Mr. SLAWSON of the Commission in Mr. WHITTEN's office. This meeting had been requested to ask for a fresh translation of the taped conversation between Cuban President BORTICOS and Ambassador ARMAS (sic - HERNANDEZ Armas). Win SCOTT had told the Commission staff visiting Mexico City that his translators, in the rush at that time, might have misconstrued certain nuances of meaning in what was a difficult recording. In view of this, Mr. SLAWSON asked that a new translation be made, if possible, by a person knowledgeable of the Cuban dialect.

"2. According to Mr. SLAWSON, only Messrs. RANKIN, WILLENS, COLEMAN, and he presently know of the telephone taps in Mexico City. SLAWSON, WILLENS, and COLEMAN were briefed on the taps during their visit to Mexico City.

"3. In about three weeks the staff will begin presenting to the Commission evidence on the conspiratorial aspect of the assassination. At this time, apparently, their evidence is against the existence of a plot. They will wish to present to the Commission the ARMAS-DORTICOS conversation. SLAWSON suggested the possibility that a knowledgeable CIA man could make this presentation, interpreting the conversation in the light of our study.

"4. Mr. WHITTEN said that we will again translate the tape, using the best available Cuban linguist, and once again study the nuances of the conversation. Any presentation to the Commission, however, would have to be referred to Messrs. HELMS and ROCCA for decision.

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