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VII. Analysis of Lee Harvey Oswald's activities in Mexico City

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A. Introduction

After the Warren Commission ~~investigation~~ published its report two very important allegations related to Lee Harvey Oswald's activities in Mexico City ^{CAME} have come to the attention of the United States investigative agencies. In 1964, Elena Garro de Paz reported that she had seen Lee Harvey Oswald, accompanied by two other men, at a party at the home of Ruben Duran Navarro, the brother-in-law of Silvia Duran. ¹⁰⁶⁰ (~~See Section VI, C.~~) In 1967, Oscar Contreras Lartigue reported that he met Lee Harvey Oswald on the campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. ¹⁰⁶¹ (UNAM) (~~See Section VI, B, above.~~)

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In addition, the testimony of the Warren Commission's primary witness related to Mexico City, Silvia Tirado Duran, has been called into question. ^{by the critics throughout the years. 1062} (~~See Warren Report pp 299-304, 733-736; and Sections I, B, V, C, and VI, A, above.~~)

Some of the information that is inconsistent with Ms. Duran's original story -- that OSWALD visited the Consulate on two occasions which were the only times she saw him -- was available at the time of the Warren Commission's inquiry although it was ignored. ¹⁰⁶³ Some of the information has developed

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after the publication of the Warren Report. ¹⁰⁶⁴ (~~See Sections V, C and VI, A and B respectively for details.~~)

The Garro and Contreras allegations, in conjunction with the weakening of Ms. Duran's story, raise three major questions: ⁽¹⁾ did Lee Harvey Oswald or an imposter visit the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City?; ⁽²⁾ other than his visits to the Cuban Consulate, what were Lee Harvey Oswald's activities in Mexico City?; and, ⁽³⁾ was Lee Harvey Oswald traveling alone in Mexico? These three questions ~~do, of course,~~ overlap somewhat in detail; ^{e.g. i.e. j} ~~for example,~~ if Oswald was not ~~traveling~~ alone, did one of his companions impersonate him at the Cuban Consulate? ^{Nonetheless} Each of the three questions will be dealt with in separate sections below. ~~If the discussion at times seems slightly redundant it is because that is an unavoidable side-effect of the interrelatedness of the questions.)~~

In an attempt to answer the ^{re} questions, ~~posed above~~ the House Select Committee on Assassinations has: 1) interviewed ¹⁰⁶⁵ Mexican and Cuban citizens ¹⁰⁶⁶ who could have knowledge of Oswald's visits to the Cuban Consulate; 2) interviewed Mexican citizens ¹⁰⁶⁷ who could have knowledge of Oswald's activities and associations in Mexico City; 3) Conducted an extensive review of the files of the Central Intelligence

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Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation that pertain to Oswald's sojourn in Mexico City. ¹⁰⁶⁸ ←

B. Did Lee Harvey Oswald or an Imposter Contact the Cuban and Soviet Consulates in Mexico City?

Lee Harvey Oswald himself probably visited the Cuban Consulate at least once since his application for a Cuban intransit visa bears his signature. ¹⁰⁶⁹ (~~Cite to Handwriting~~

~~analysis.~~) Though the Cuban Consulate allowed visa applicants to take blank applications out of the Consulate to be returned when completed, ¹⁰⁷⁰ Silvia Duran ^{stated she} was certain that Oswald signed the application in her presence. ¹⁰⁷¹ (~~HSCA Inter-~~
~~view of Silvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Document #311681, pp. 31-~~

~~32~~.) Oswald's signature on the Cuban visa application, however, does not by itself rule out the possibility that someone impersonated Oswald in contacts with the Cuban and Soviet Embassies. — ~~_____~~

An analysis of the telephone conversations (which the CIA's Mexico City Station intercepted by tapping the Soviet Consulate and the Soviet Military Attache's telephone) reveals that someone, later identified as Oswald, visited the Cuban Consulate at least two times and the Soviet Consulate at least three ¹⁰⁷² times. (See Sections II, ^{That is why}

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^{testimony} stories would tend to indicate that Oswald, or someone impersonating him, visited the Cuban Consulate at least one and possibly two additional times on September 27, 1963. Silvia Duran says 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. ¹⁰⁸³ (~~Duran Interview, 6/6/78, JFK Document #011681.~~) Ms. Duran sent Oswald to obtain photographs that he needed for the visa application. ¹⁰⁸⁴ (~~Ibid., p. 20-23.~~) Eusebio Azcue recalls that this visit probably occurred on the date on the visa application, 9/27/63. ¹⁰⁸⁵ (~~Public testimony of Eusebio Azcue, 9/18/78, p. 36.~~)

Although unlikely, if someone impersonated Oswald in Mexico, it is possible that the individual's first visit occurred before Oswald's arrival. It is unlikely because such actions would have been poor tradecraft.)

Ms. Duran also stated that Oswald returned at approximately 1:00 p.m. with four photographs. ¹⁰⁸⁶⁻¹⁰⁸⁶ (~~Duran Interview, 6/6/78, JFK Document #011681, p. 23.~~) Eusebio Azcue also stated that the individual later identified as Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate about 1:00 p.m. with the photographs probably on "the date that appears on the application, that is to say on the 27th." ¹⁰⁸⁷ (~~Public~~)

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Committee believes that there is a possibility that the

~~Testimony of Eusebio Azcue, 9/18/78, p. 32-33)~~ The argument between Azcue and the individual ~~probably~~ occurred during this visit. (See Sections V, C, and VI, B, above.)

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Ms. Duran stated that Oswald's third, and last visit, occurred in the late afternoon after working hours on the 27th. (~~Duran Interview, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. #011681, p. 37.~~)

This visit is confirmed by (the CIA's) tap on the Soviet Consulate. (~~See above.~~)

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In addition to the alleged Oswald visits to the Consulates, there were other telephonic contacts that may have been between Oswald, or an imposter, and the Consulates. (See Sections III, A, 1, and III, B, above.)

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Several details about Oswald's visits to the Cuban Consulate, and telephonic contacts with both Consulates indicate that the individual involved was not Oswald.

Silvia Duran's description of Oswald did not resemble Oswald's true physical appearance. (~~HSCA Interview of Silvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. #01668; Cite also early report. See Section V, C for details.~~) This

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description, which appeared early in the reporting of information obtained from Ms. Duran was deleted from subsequent reports and was not at all mentioned in the Warren Report. (See Sections V, C, for details.) Eusebio Azcue's

description of Oswald was similar to Silvia Duran's, but

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more detailed. ¹⁰⁹⁴ (~~Azcar site.~~) Perhaps the most remarkable thing about these descriptions is their similarity to Elena Garra de Paz' description of one of Oswald's alleged companions. ¹⁰⁹⁵ (~~See Section II, C, 4.3 and III, A, 1 below.~~)

~~(NOTE: add blond man on Knoll if found.)~~

Another possible indication that an imposter, ~~as~~ ^{also} ~~well as~~ ^{have} Oswald, visited the Consulate is the 9/28/63 ¹⁰⁹⁶ (intercepted) conversation. Silvia Duran adamantly denies that Oswald visited the Cuban Consulate on Saturday, September 28, 1963. ¹⁰⁹⁷ In light of (the CIA) intercept of that date, Ms. Duran has either lied to the Committee, or the individual who visited the Consulate on September 18 was not Oswald. ¹⁰⁹⁸

~~(Note: the CIA's classification of the transcript of this conversation prevented the HSCA from directly confronting Ms. Duran with the information.)~~ Ms. Duran, in light of the inconsistencies detailed in Sections V, C and VI, A above, may not be the most credible witness, but there are indications that she was truthful when she stated that Oswald did not visit the Consulate on September 28. The September 28, 1963 conversation was linked to Oswald because of the marginal notations made by the CIA translator on the transcript. ¹⁰⁹⁹ (~~See Sections II, C, 4.3 and III, A, 1 above.~~) The translator noted on the transcript that the

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The Committee ^{notes the possibility, but does not conclude,} ~~declines to speculate about~~
whether ^{that} the missing production from the
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^{some} ~~anything~~ to do with the possibility that
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caller spoke "terrible, hardly recognizable Russian."¹¹⁰⁰

(~~Cite transcript.~~) On October 1, 1963, a man called

the Soviet Consulate and identified himself as "Lee Os-

wald."¹¹⁰¹ (~~Cite transcript.~~) This man also stated that he

had been at the Consulate on Saturday, the 28th. (~~Ibid.~~)¹¹⁰²

The translator noted that this was the same man who had

called the Consulate "a day or so ago" and had spoken-

in broken Russian.¹¹⁰³ From this information, and possibly

a voice comparison (~~see Section IV, B, above~~)¹¹⁰⁴ the 9/28

caller was identified as Oswald.¹¹⁰⁵ The problem with assum-

ing that the caller on 9/28 and 10/~~1~~^{10/1} was Oswald is that

Oswald spoke fluent Russian.¹¹⁰⁶ (Cites.) Granted, Ms.

Duran's denial of the Saturday visit and the proficiency

of the caller's Russian is not sufficient evidence to

conclude that the person who visited the Cuban Consulate

on Saturday and who called the Soviet Consulate on Satur-

day and on October 1st was an imposter. Yet the informa-

tion is sufficient to seriously question the assumption

that it was Oswald, especially in light of Azcue's and Duran's

descriptions and Elena Garro de Paz's ^{allegation.} story.

~~INSERT DATE~~

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Three calls that also occurred early on September

27, 1963,¹¹⁰⁷ may have been made by an imposter. At approxi-

mately 10:30 a.m. a man called the Soviet Military Attache

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~~(Public Testimony of Alfredo Mirabel Diaz, 9/18/78, p. 119.)~~

~~and sent~~ ^Q Oswald ^{WAS THEN SENT} to obtain photographs and to the Russian Embassy to get the necessary Russian visa. ¹¹¹⁷ (HSCA Inter-
~~view of Silvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc. #11681, p. 23.)~~

Oswald returned to the Cuban Consulate around 1:00 p.m. ¹¹²⁰

~~(Ibid., p. 31.)~~ At this point, ~~he~~ ^{(1121) he} had his encounter with Azcue ^{and} completed ~~this VISA~~ application. ~~(Ibid.)~~ Oswald

~~probably~~ realized at this point that he would have prob-
lems obtaining the visas. ¹¹²² After this visit to the Cuban

Consulate, which lasted approximately fifteen minutes ¹¹²³

~~(Public testimony of Alfredo Mirabal Diaz, 9/18/78, p. 119)~~

Oswald tried to contact the Soviet Consul whom Oswald
claimed had assured him that he would have no problems
obtaining a visa. ¹¹²⁴ ~~(cite)~~ Hence, the 1:25 call. ¹¹²⁵ During

this conversation Oswald learned that the Consul would
be in that evening between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. ¹¹²⁶ Os-

wald returned to the Cuban Consulate at 4:00 and ~~persuaded~~
Silvia Duran ^{called} ~~to intercede with~~ the Soviet Consul on his
behalf. ¹¹²⁷ ~~(HSCA Interview of Silvia Duran, 6/6/78, JFK Doc.~~

~~#01168, p. 37.)~~ Hence, the 4:05 and 4:26 p.m. calls in-
volving Duran. ¹¹²⁸

But there is a problem with attributing the first
three calls on September 27, 1963 to Oswald. The conversa-

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ations are all in Spanish. With the exception of Delgado, the evidence indicates that Oswald did not speak Spanish. (Cites:) Hence, either the above-detailed calls were not made by Oswald or Oswald could speak ^{Spanish} English.

There is not enough evidence to firmly conclude that some one did impersonate Oswald in Mexico. On the other hand, the evidence is of such a nature that the possibility cannot be dismissed.

the testimony of

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1130

*it's not
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there is
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evidence
that he
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~~Why not include the~~

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C. What were Lee Harvey Oswald's Activities in Mexico City?

When the Warren Commission wrote about Lee Harvey Oswald's activities in Mexico City, it concluded:

By Saturday, September 28, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald had failed to obtain visas at both the Cuban and Soviet Embassies. From Sunday, September 29, through Wednesday morning, October 2, when he left Mexico City on a bus bound for the United States, Oswald spent considerable time making his travel arrangements, sightseeing and checking again with the Soviet Embassy to learn whether anything had happened on his visa application. ¹¹³¹

needs expansion

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~~(Warren Commission Report, p. 301.)~~ Subsequent to the Warren Commission's Report, the allegations of Elena Garro ¹¹³² (See Section VI, C, above.) and Oscar Contreras Lartigue ¹¹³³ (See Section VI, D, above.) came to the attention of the United States investigative agencies.

The main allegation of both these people, that they met Lee Harvey Oswald in Mexico City, remains to this day without direct corroboration. Yet the Committee feels that it cannot dismiss these allegations ^{without giving them any consideration} ~~entirely out of hand for several reasons illustrated below.~~

The testimony of Silvia Duran and the Cuban Consulate Officials Azcue and Mirabal place Oswald's last contact with the Cuban Embassy on Friday evening, September 27, 1963. ¹¹³⁴

(See Section VII, D, above.) The transcripts (from the CIA's wiretaps on the Soviet Consulate) place Oswald's last visits to the Soviet and Cuban Consulates on Saturday morning, September 28, 1963. ¹¹³⁵ (See Sections 3, A, 1 and III, B, 2, above.)

Oswald's last telephonic contact with the Soviet Consulate came on Tuesday, October 1, 1963. ¹¹³⁶ (Ibid.) Oswald's activities on the days between September 28 and October 1, are not clearly recorded. The Warren Commission speculated that he spent

Cite Webster memo on this paper the W.C. in a footnote.

most of this time sightseeing and making travel arrangements. ¹¹³⁷
~~(Warren Report, p. 301.)~~ It is entirely possible that Oswald did spend some of his time during this weekend sightseeing and making his travel arrangements. It is also entirely possible that, after his failure to obtain his visas on Saturday, September 28, that Oswald did not give up completely and did attend a party where he would have come into contact with the Cuban Consular officials and, later, sought help from pro-Castro students.

It is entirely possible that Ruben Duran had a "twist party" on September 30, or October 1 as Elena Garro has claimed. ⁽¹¹³⁸⁾
 Ruben, Horacio, Lydia and Silvia Duran all admitted that they frequently had twist parties in 1963. ¹¹³⁹ (

~~It should be noted that this party allegedly occurred on a night when Oswald's activities are not known.~~ Only Silvia Duran

recalled Elena Garro attending any of the "twist parties" at the Duran's home. ¹¹⁴⁰ She recalled Elena and Elena's daughter, Elinita, attending one twist party at Ruben's home in 1963. ⁽¹¹⁴¹⁾

All ^{other} the Durans adamantly deny ¹⁰⁰ that Lee Harvey Oswald had ^{attended} ~~been~~ ^{a twist party at one of their homes (1142)} at any party at any of their homes. (

Many of the details of Elena Garro's allegations have not been, or cannot be, corroborated. For example, Elena's allegation that some of the people who had been at the party were taken to Veracruz under the protection of Governor Lopez Arias ⁽¹¹⁴³⁾ has not been verified. Ruben Duran denied that he

had ever discussed the assassination with Elena Garro. (1144.) Eusebio Azcue denied that he had discussed President Kennedy with Emilio Carballido at a party at the Duran's home as alleged by Elena Garro. (1145.) The Committee has not been able to verify whether or not guards were posted outside of Elena's home in 1963 as she claims. ~~_____~~

But other details of Elena's story ~~make it hard to~~ ^{are very} ~~dismiss out of hand.~~ ^{credible.} Perhaps the most striking is the suggestion that Oswald's relationship with Silvia Duran was more extensive than just the business contacts in the Cuban Consulate. (1146) Another detail is the manner in which ~~her~~ ^{she} Elena's allegations were handled, and the manner in which this Committee's attempts to investigate those allegations have been frustrated. (1147)

In 1965 Elena Garro reported that Silvia Duran had been Oswald's mistress while he was in Mexico City. (1148) In 1967 this report was confirmed by (a CIA agent) who talked to Silvia Duran. (1149) The CIA Station did not consider the information significant (and told the agent to end his contact with Ms. Duran) (1150) (~~See Section VI, A, 2, above for details.~~) If that information is accurate, then ^{that} Silvia ^{ed} inviting Oswald to a party would not have been ~~that~~ surprising. Silvia Duran admitted that the Mexican police had questioned her on this point but denied that she had had an affair with Oswald. (1151) Ms. Duran denied having any extra-marital affairs while she was married to Horacio Duran. (1152)

This denial is not consistent with evidence of her reputation

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at the Cuban Consulate. (A CIA penetration agent there) reported to his case officer that all that would have to be done to recruit Silvia Duran, whom he referred to by using the Spanish word for whore, would be to get a blonde blue-eyed American into bed with her. (CIA ¹¹⁵³ .) There is also/information that indicates that Silvia Duran had an affair with a Cuban Ambassador to Mexico in the early 1960's. ¹¹⁵⁴

The HSCA attempted to interview (the CIA penetration agent) ¹¹⁵⁵ about Ms. Duran. An interview with (the agent) was also desired so as to attempt to verify whether ~~she~~ Elena Garro ¹¹⁵⁶ had created a disturbance at the Cuban Embassy on November 23, 1963. The Committee's attempts to interview (this agent) were frustrated. ¹¹⁵⁷ (~~See appendix 3.~~)

Ms. Garro's claim that she stayed at the Hotel Vermont ¹¹⁵⁸ ~~were~~ ^{was} verified by the Mexico City Legal Attache on October 13, 1966. (~~See Section VI, C, 10, above for details.~~) Ms. Garro claimed that she had been held there by Manuel Calvillo whom she believed worked for the Mexican Ministry of Government. ¹¹⁵⁹ (In 1963, Mr. Calvillo was an unwitting asset of the Central Intelligence Agency.) ¹¹⁶⁰ Ms. Garro claimed that she told Mr. Calvillo her story on November 23, 1963. ¹¹⁶¹ (Yet) the CIA Mexico City Station did not receive a report (from Calvillo) on this matter until November 24, 1964, the same day that Elena first told her story to American officials. ¹¹⁶² For these reasons it was felt that Manuel Calvillo could well be a key ~~determining~~ ^{determining} to ~~unravelling~~ ^{unravelling} the veracity or ~~inaccuracy~~ of Ms. Garro's story. The Committee's attempt to interview Mr. Calvillo

were also frustrated. (~~See appendix 3:~~)

There is also circumstantial corroboration of Ms. Garro's allegation's regarding June Cobb Sharp. (For example, Ms. Cobb was indeed a CIA agent and she did file the first report of Ms. Garro's story. ¹¹⁶⁴ It should be noted that this first report was accurate in its detail) in that Ms. Garro's story remained essentially the same in subsequent repetitions. Ms. Garro claimed that she kicked Ms. Cobb out of her house. ¹¹⁶⁵ (There is a notation on Ms. Cobb's report that she was not able to regain access to Ms. Garro.) ¹¹⁶⁶ The Committee attempted to obtain an interview with Ms. Cobb, but was once again frustrated. ¹¹⁶⁷

Reviewing the manner in which the CIA Mexico City Station and the Legal Attache's office in Mexico City handled Ms. Garro's allegations reveals that, at best, ~~they~~ were handled in an irresponsible manner because they were dismissed after a superficial investigation. The first report that came to the CIA was mis-filed and forgotten. ¹¹⁶⁸ The Legat, after talking to Elena, dismissed her story after interviewing one person whom she said may have been at the party. ¹¹⁶⁹ The manner in which the official American community handled Charles Thomas' reporting is detailed in Section VI, C, 11, above.) Mr. Thomas speculated in 1969 about why Ms. Garro's story had been largely ignored by the American official's in Mexico:

It would appear that whereas the FBI has discounted the Elena Garro allegations, the CIA is still considerably disturbed by them. The CIA may not have pressed for

MS Garro's
allegation

further investigation, however, for a number of reasons: 1) considering the sensitive overlap and subtle competition between two intelligence collecting agencies, it had to yield to the FBI's clear jurisdiction; 2) there are obvious complications in conducting such an investigation in a foreign country; 3) there is a close and delicate relationship between the CIA Station Chief and (the former Minister of Interior --President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz) and 4) some of the people appearing in the Elena Garro scenario may well be agents of the CIA. Under the circumstances it is unlikely that any further investigation of this matter will ever take place unless it is ordered by a high official in Washington. #70

~~(Thomas Memorandum dated 7/25/69, JFK Document # 11684.)~~

~~STP~~ The Committee's ^{attempted} ~~last hope~~ was to locate Elena Garro.

Although the Committee established telephonic contact with Ms. Garro, it was never able to arrange an interview. [1171]

Consequently, the Committee was totally frustrated in this aspect of it's investigation, but yet believes that there is a strong possibility that Lee Harvey Oswald did attend a twist party at the home of Ruben Duran.

The Committee also considers it possible that Lee Harvey Oswald contacted pro-Castro students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, hereinafter UNAM.) as claimed by Oscar Contreras Lartigue. ¹¹⁷² ~~(See Section VI, D, above for details.)~~ Silvia Duran admitted that she had told Oswald of two ways in which he could get a Cuban visa: 1) he could get an intransit visa by first obtaining a visa to another Communist country such as Russia; 2) he could obtain a regular Cuban visa by knowing someone in Cuba who would, ~~after a fashion,~~ vouch for him. ¹¹⁷³ ~~()~~ It is possible that after Oswald's attempts to obtain a visa by the first method were frustrated

with the exception of Elena Garro de Paz who stated that Oswald was accompanied by two "beatnik looking boys" ¹¹⁸⁰ ~~(See Section VI, C, above for details.)~~ at Ruben Duran's party, have stated that when they saw Oswald in Mexico he was alone. But yet the Committee does not believe that it can readily dismiss Ms. Garro's allegation that Oswald had a companion in Mexico in light of: 1) the corroboration of details of Ms Garro's story and the manner in which the American authorities handled the investigation of that story ¹¹⁸¹ ~~(See Section VII, C, above.)~~; 2) The possibility that someone impersonated Oswald in Mexico ¹¹⁸² ~~(See Section VII, B above.)~~ the and 3) the similarity in/description of Oswald by Ms. Duran and Mr. Azcue and the description of Oswald's companion by Ms. Garro. ¹¹⁸³ ~~(See Sections VI, A, B, and C, above.)~~

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The Commission undertook an intensive investigation to determine Oswald's purpose and activities on this journey, with specific reference to reports that Oswald was an agent of the Cuban or Soviet Governments. As a result of its investigation, the Commission believes that it has been able to reconstruct and explain most of Oswald's actions during this time.

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