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NOVEMBER 22, 1963 CUBANA FLIGHT

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Book V of the Senate Intelligence Committee Report refers to a reported five-hour delay (6:00 PM EST to 11:00 PM EST) of a Cubana flight from Mexico to Havana the evening of President Kennedy's assassination, November 22, 1963. (Senate Intelligence Committee Report, April 23, 1976, p.30) The most intriguing aspect of the report was that the alleged delay was to await arrival at 10:30 PM EST of a private twin-engined aircraft, which deposited an unidentified passenger who boarded the Cubana aircraft without customs clearance and traveled to Havana in the pilot's cabin. (ibid ps. 60 -61) The Senate Intelligence Committee wrote that the Central Intelligence Agency "had no information indicating that a followup investigation was conducted to determine the identity of the passenger and had no further information on the passenger, and no explanation for why a followup investigation was not conducted." (ibid p.61)

The Senate Intelligence Committee Report raises four major Questions:

a) Did the Central Intelligence Agency write the Senate Intelligence Committee that no investigation of the November 22, 1963 Cubana flight was conducted?

- b) Did the Central Intelligence Agency further investigate the allegation?
- c) What were the results of the Central Intelligence Agency investigation?
- d) Were the results of the Central Intelligence Agency investigation forwarded to the Senate Intelligence Committee?

In an attempt to answer the questions raised by the Senate Intelligence Committee Report, the House Select Committee on Assassinations has done the following:

- a) Conducted an extensive review of the Central Intelligence Agency files that pertain to the November 22, 1963 Cubana flights.
- b) Reviewed Tab B of the 1977 Cia Staff Report which included a section on the November 22, 1963 Cubana flights.
- c) Reviewed the February 4, 1976 Central Intelligence Agency letter to the Senate Intelligence Committee.

DID THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WRITE THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE THAT NO INVESTIGATION OF THE NOVEMBER 22, 1963 CUBANA FLIGHT WAS CONDUCTED?

After a careful review of the February 4, 1976 Central Intelligence Agency letter to the

Senate Intelligence Committee , the House Select Committee on Assassinations has determined that the Senate Intelligence's interpretation of the letter is misleading. The Central Intelligence Agency wrote the Senate Intelligence Committee that the Mexican authorities were asked about the reported flight delay, although there was no recorded response. (CIA letter to Senate Intelligence Committee, 2/4/76)

DID THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY FURTHER INVESTIGATE THE ALLEGATION?

The Central Intelligence Agency conducted regular surveillance of Cubana flights, filing cable reports to Headquarters. (1977 CIA Staff Report, Tab B, p. 11) There was one unilateral CIA surveillance team that observed arrivals and departures of Cubana flights, reporting any unusual incidents and providing copies of flight manifests. (ibid, p.11) The Mexican authorities also had a surveillance team of its own at the airport which provided the CIA with photographs of passports and copies of passenger lists. (ibid p.11) Additionally, a telephone tap operation (LIENVOY) against the Cuban Embassy provided transcripts of conversations with the Cubana office and the Mexican Airport Control office.

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INVESTIGATION?

The LIENVOY transcripts record a series of discussions about the status of the November 22, 1963 Cubana flight-- when it arrived and when it departed. The transcripts show that the flight arrived at the airport at 1620 hours (All times used will be Mexico City time to avoid confusion) Mexico City time. (HSCA Staff Review of November 22, 1963 LIENVOY transcripts) Prior to the arrival of the aircraft, one person stated that the aircraft was due at 1630 hours and "it will go" at 1730, suggesting a quick turnaround that would have reduced unloading and loading time, as well as servicing to a relatively short period. (ibid) However, the key report on the departure of the aircraft was a statement at 2040 hours that the aircraft had departed for Cuba five minutes earlier, i.e., 2035 hours. (ibid)

DIFFERENCE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE AND HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS FINDINGS

The House Select Committee on Assassinations findings differ from those of the Senate Intelligence Committee in the following manner:

- a) The Cubana flight was on the ground in Mexico City for a total of four hours and about ten minutes. It was not delayed five hours as reported in Book V.

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b) The Cubana flight departed at 2035 hours Mexico City time, 55 minutes ahead of the alleged arrival at 2130 of a private flight with a secret passenger..

c) The 2035 departure also contrasts further with the Senate Intelligence Committee Report that the Cubana flight departed at 2200.

No record of a November 22, 1963 twin-engine aircraft carrying a lone passenger exists. In addition, no record exists of a passenger traveling to Havana in the pilot's cabin. In view of the surveillance coverage of the Cubana flight, it is doubtful that the alleged activity involving the private twin-engined aircraft and passenger would have gone unnoticed or unreported had it occurred.

WERE THE RESULTS OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY FORWARDED TO THE SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

The Central Intelligence Agency gave the Senate Intelligence Committee only the informant allegations. The Senate Intelligence Committee did not review the LIFIRE or LIENVOY records. Relying solely on the informant's allegations, the Senate Intelligence Committee could not have reported the story any differently.