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STAFF REPORT ON THE
EVOLUTION AND IMPLICATIONS
OF THE CIA - SPONSORED
ASSASSINATION CONSPIRACIES

~~ISSUE I - CUBAN CONSPIRACY~~

AGAINST FIDEL CASTRO

Introduction

The attempt of the United States government to assassinate Cuban premier Fidel Castro as well as other foreign leaders during the turbulent decade of the 1960s shocked and disgusted the American citizen. When sources disclosed that the Central Intelligence Agency (hereinafter "CIA") intentionally solicited and received the assistance of various members of organized crime, La Cosa Nostra, in the furtherance of such plots, more outrage prevailed. Civilized society simply did not and does not condone such acts as a legitimate instrument of foreign policy. There is no excuse; no rationalization.

The effect and influence of these actions did not stop, however, with invoking the disdain of the American public and world. These assassination attempts gave birth to the haunting theory that Fidel Castro orchestrated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in defensive retaliation for the plots on his life.

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In its Final Report published in April, 1976, the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (hereinafter "SSC") responded to this theory.

In this Report, the SSC focused on two operations of the CIA which may have provoked Castro into retaliation. First, the SSC documented the joint effort of the CIA and Organized Crime to eliminate Castro. Second, the SSC examined the nature and extent of the CIA AMLASH operation. The SSC concluded its analysis with the statement that "he Committee believes the investigation should continue in certain areas, and for that reason does not reach any final conclusions."¹

This analysis is an attempt to make such conclusions. It is not the purpose of the remainder of this material to ~~minimize~~ review ^{every} ~~the~~ details of the CIA-Mafia plots or of the AMLASH operation, to resolve all of the conflicting viewpoints of the SSC and the CIA in regard to the importance of the various operations, or to subject anyone to moral tongue-lashing.² Instead, this material first seeks

to present a comprehensive review of the CIA operation AMLASH and of the involvement or potential involvement of organized crime in the CIA operations against Castro during 1960-1963. From this review certain ~~inferences~~^{inferences} and conclusions are then drawn concerning the nature, scope, and ramifications of these operations.

II. BACKGROUND MATERIAL - RELEVANT SUMMARY

A. CIA-Mafia Plots

The genesis of the utilization of the United States criminal syndicate by the CIA to attempt to assassinate Castro is placed by the 1967 Report of the Inspector General as occurring during a conversation between the Deputy Director of Plans, Richard Bissell, and the Director of Security, Colonel Sheffield Edwards.³ These plots extended from ^{late} 1960 until early 1963 and can be divided into two stages.⁴ The first stage occurred from August, 1960 until April, 1961, and can best be termed as Phase I or the pre-Bay of Pigs period.⁵ From April, 1961 until late 1961, the CIA ^{April 1962} takes the position that the plots were dormant.⁶

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b57A

Phase
Inception Aug 1960
Planning - mullings
Sept - - -

In late 1961 the CIA decided to renew the CIA-Mafia plots, then creating Phase II, and kept them active until late 1962 or early 1963.⁷

During the initial stages of Phase I, Edwards assigned the specific task of locating the proper persons to assassinate Castro to ~~James "Big Jim" Connell~~^W, who was Chief of the Operational Support Division of the Office of Security.⁸ Both men agreed that ~~Connell~~^{the Operational Support Chief} should contact Robert A. Maheu, whom the CIA had previously used in several covert operations, to recruit the necessary personnel.⁹

Maheu subsequently contacted Roselli,¹⁰ who in turn ~~recruited~~^{contacted} two persons, initially known to ~~Connell~~^{the Operational Support Chief} as "Sam Gold" and "Joe."¹¹ ~~Connell~~ says he, along with Maheu, later discovered the true identities of these persons to be Sam Giancana and Santo Trafficante,¹² respectively.

After meeting several times in Miami and deciding upon poison pills as the method of assassination, the 1967 IG Report ~~contains~~^{reported} that Trafficante made the arrangements for the assassination of Castro with one of his contacts inside Cuba on one of the trips.

he allegedly made to Havana, Cuba.¹³ This contact was ~~Juan Orta~~, a Cuban official who held a position close to Castro.¹⁴

The 1967 IG Report then states that Roselli passed the pills to Trafficante.¹⁵ Roselli subsequently told O'Connell that the pills were delivered ~~to Orta~~ *to the official* in Cuba.¹⁶ ~~Orta~~ *The official* apparently retained the pills for a few weeks and then returned them since he was unable to fulfill any plan.¹⁷ ~~Orta~~ was no longer in a position to kill Castro because he had lost his Cuban post.¹⁸

The Cuban official
With ~~Orta~~ unable to perform, the syndicate *Neopolitan Support Club* looked elsewhere. Roselli next told ~~O'Connell~~ *O'Connell* sometime during early 1961, that Trafficante knew a man prominent in the Cuban exile movement who could accomplish the job, ~~Dr. Manuel Antonio de Verona y Loreda~~ ¹⁹ *The Cuban exile leader*. After receiving approval, Trafficante approached ~~Verona~~ *Verona* about assassinating Castro and *The exile leader* reported that ~~Verona~~ *Verona* was receptive. ²⁰ The 1967 IG Report states that ~~O'Connell~~ *The support chief* again distributed pills *The exile leader* which eventually reached ~~Verona~~.

This activity concluded the pre-Bay of Pigs phase of the plots. The 1967 IGR does not document any ^{Actual} attempt to ~~administer~~ administer the pills to Castro.

The 1967 IGR relates that after a period of apparent dormancy, ²² Bissell directed William Harvey in approximately November of 1961 to ²³ ~~reactivate~~ reactivate the CIA-Mafia plots. ²⁴ ~~McCormack~~ ^{The Overseas Script Chief} therefore introduced Harvey to Roselli. During this phase, the CIA decided against using Giancana or Trafficante; instead, a person referred to as "MAGRO" entered the plot as the person who would help provide Castro ²⁵ contacts. In addition, the plots still utilized the services of ^{The Cuban exile} ~~Antonio de Verona~~ (26).

Even though the plots no longer included Trafficante and Giancana, the CIA admitted that Roselli most likely kept them informed. [?] ~~The CIA~~ ^{was noted in} ~~noted in~~ The 1967 IGR that ^{was} "/i/t would be naive to assume that Roselli did not take the precaution of informing higher-ups in the syndicate that he was working in a territory considered to be the private

The 1967 report for Ins 132/Trans 1 vice of "GR CIA" is imprecise.

"admitted" = judgmental word

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domain of someone else in the syndicate."

In June of 1962 Roselli reported to Harvey
the Cuban exile leader
that ~~Verona~~ dispatched a three-man team into Cuba
with the general assignment of recruiting others
to kill Castro, and, if the opportunity arose, to
kill him themselves, maybe through the use of pills. 28
In September of 1962, Roselli reported to Harvey
in Miami that the "medicine" was reported in place,
that the three-man team was safe, and that ~~Verona~~ *Roselli*
was prepared to dispatch another three-man team
to infiltrate Castro's bodyguard. 29 In December,
1962, Roselli and Harvey agreed that not much seemed to
be occurring and by February, 1963, Harvey terminated
operations, 30
the plots.

B. The Las Vegas Wiretap Incident

The 1967 IGR also mentioned an event that
occurred during Phase I of the CIA-Mafia plots which
resulted in the first dissemination of the details
of the plot to persons other than the ones involved
in the operation. On October 31, 1960, Las Vegas
police arrested Arthur J. Balletti, an employee of a
Florida investigator named Edward DuBois, for placing

an electronic bug in a hotel room in Las Vegas. ³¹
 Subsequent investigation determined that Robert A. Maheu authorized the surveillance and possibly the wiretap of the subject involved and that Maheu probably ³² acted on behalf of Giancana and the CIA.

The violation of the wiretap statute placed the case under federal jurisdiction and the FBI soon began an investigation. In the course of this investigation, Maheu informed the FBI that he instituted the surveillance on behalf of CIA efforts to obtain Cuban intelligence through the hoodlum element, including Giancana. ³³ In its efforts to prevent the prosecution of Balletti, Maheu, and an unidentified individual known as J. W. Harrison, the CIA eventually told the Justice Department the details of Phase I of the CIA-Mafia plots to kill Castro. ~~This~~ ^{This most accurately} ~~can~~ ^{best} be related through the following

memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover to Attorney General Ramsey Clark quoted in part:³⁴

Blank letterhead memorandum 3-6-67

TO: Attorney General
FROM: Director, FBI

TOP SECRET

Attorney General Robert Kennedy indicated that a few days prior to 5-9-62 he had been advised by the CIA that Robert A. Maheu had been hired by the CIA to approach Sam Giancana with a proposition of paying \$150,000 to hire gunmen to go into Cuba and kill Castro. He further stated CIA admitted having assisted Maheu in making the "bugging" installation in Las Vegas which uncovered this clandestine operation and for this reason CIA could not afford to have any action taken against Giancana or Maheu. Mr. Kennedy stated that upon learning CIA had not cleared its action in hiring Maheu and Giancana with the Department of Justice, he issued orders that the CIA should never again take such steps without first checking with the Department of Justice.

Mr. Kennedy further advised that because of this matter it would be very difficult to initiate any prosecution against Giancana, as Giancana could immediately bring out the fact the United States Government had approached him to arrange for the assassination of Castro. He stated the same was true concerning any action we might take against Maheu for any violation in which he might become involved.

In summary, the Las Vegas wiretap ~~incident~~^{incident} forced the CIA to acknowledge the existence of the CIA-Mafia plots to non-CIA government officials

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and provided the first occasion for participants to manipulate the operation to prevent prosecution.

C. Robert Maheu and the Long Committee

The next major event related to the CIA-Mafia plots occurred in 1966 when Maheu used his involvement with the CIA to avoid testifying before Senator Edward Long's Committee which was investigating
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invasions of privacy. The attorney for Maheu, Edward Pierpont Morgan, informed the House Select Committee on Assassinations (hereinafter the "Committee") that Maheu contacted him during the fall of 1966 and said he was going to be called before the Long Committee in conjunction with the Morgenthau investiga-
36 35a
tion. Maheu then informed Morgan of the plots and suggested that any testimony might necessarily reveal his
37 35b
previous covert activities with the CIA. Morgan then contacted Senator Long and Lawrence Houston, the General Counsel to the CIA, to reiterate Maheu's concerns in an apparently successful effort to block
35c-38
any testimony.

D. Roselli Efforts to Avoid Prosecution

The SSC related that in May, 1966, the FBI threatened to deport Roselli "for living in the United States under an assumed name unless he cooperated in an investigation of the Mafia." ³⁷⁻³⁹

The SSC then states that Roselli contacted Edwards who subsequently spoke to the FBI in regard to Roselli. ³⁸⁻⁴⁰

The SSC reports that Roselli again contacted CIA sources in an effort to thwart prosecution when Roselli was arrested for fraudulent gambling activities at the Friars Club in Beverly Hills in 1967. ⁴¹⁻³⁹ Roselli

contacted Harvey, who was no longer a CIA employee, to represent him. ⁴²⁻⁴⁰ Harvey subsequently attempted ^{U.S. v. Cross (1/1/67)} to influence the CIA into preventing the prosecution. ⁴³⁻⁴¹

The Justice Department, however, subsequently convicted Roselli for a violation of the interstate gambling laws. ⁴²⁻⁴⁴

E. Debut of the Retaliation Theory

The genesis of this theory can be attributed to an interview that Premier Castro held on September 7, 1963, with Associated Press reporter Daniel Harker. In that interview, Castro warned against the United States "aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders." He stated, according to Harker, that United States leaders would be in danger if they promoted any attempt to eliminate the leaders of Cuba. In early January, 1967, Edward Morgan approached Drew Pearson, related the background of the plots, posed the possibility that the plots could have provoked a Castro retaliation, and asked Pearson to inform Chief Justice Earl Warren of the operation. Warren subsequently informed Secret Service Director James J. Rawley who in turn notified the FBI. Morgan informed the Committee that Roselli initially approached him complaining of excessive FBI surveillance since he had been involved in this patriotic venture. Roselli also informed Morgan that Castro had retaliated for these plots by assassinating President Kennedy.

After receiving this information the FBI decided not to further investigate the allegation. ⁴⁷
 Following the publication of the Jack Anderson and Drew Pearson articles of March 3 and 7, 1967, however, where the theory of retaliation first gained public notoriety, President Johnson ordered the FBI to investigate the matter. ^{53 48} The FBI consequently interviewed Edward Morgan on March 20, ^{53 49} 1967. Morgan informed the FBI that he represented clients that were reasonable individuals who entered into a project that they understood to have high governmental backing and which involved the assassination of Fidel Castro. ^{54 50} Morgan then stated that his clients had reason to suspect that Castro learned of these plots and killed President Kennedy in ^{51 55} retaliation.

The FBI investigation resulted in President Johnson acquiring a personal interest in the retaliation theory which prompted CIA Director Richard Helms to prepare a report on the assassination plots. ^{52 56}

F. 1967 IGR

On March 23, 1967 Director Helms ordered the CIA Inspector General to prepare a report on the CIA assassination plots. ^{57 53} This report detailed the accounts of various CIA ^{plans and} operations against ~~Castro~~ ^{Castro} including an analysis of the CIA-Organized Crime plots and the AMLASH operation. The IGR also examined the 1960 Las Vegas wiretap incident.

In reference to the AMLASH operation, the IGR related AMLASH's activities in Madrid, Spain in late 1964 and early 1965, where AMLASH was meeting with Manuel Artime. ^{56 54} The IGR further noted that Rafael Garcia-Bongo, a former lawyer for Santo ⁵⁹ Trafficante, was in Madrid, Spain in March, 1965. ⁵⁵ Bongo claimed to be in contact with dissident Cuban military leaders, including AMLASH. ^{56 50}

G. Anderson Articles

In 1971, Anderson once again published information promoting the retaliation theory in two articles dated January 18 and 19. These articles exhibited more detail, relating that several assassins made it to a rooftop within shooting distance of Castro before being apprehended, that this event

occurred in late February or early March, 1963, that Robert Kennedy at least condoned the CIA-Mafia plots, and that Roselli delivered poison pills to be used in killing Castro to a contact at the Miami Beach Fountainbleu Hotel on March 13, 1961. ⁶¹
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H. Roselli deportation

9. In 1971, the same year that Anderson released additional information on the plots, the CIA contacted the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice, in an attempt to prevent information on CIA operations from being disclosed in the event INS brought deportation proceedings against Roselli. ⁵⁷⁶²

The SSC stated in its Interim Report, released in November, 1975, that the deportation order was still in the process of being litigated. ⁵⁸⁶³ In August,

1976, authorities discovered Roselli's butchered body stuffed in an oil drum and floating in Miami's Biscayne Bay. ^{64 59} His colleague in the plots to kill Castro, Sam Giancana, had been shot to death in his home in June, 1975. ⁶⁵

I. The Senate Select Committee To Study
Governmental Operations with Respect to
Intelligence Activities

In connection with its mandate to investigate the full range of governmental intelligence activities, the SSC "examined the performance of the intelligence agencies in conducting their investigation of the assassination and their relationship to the Warren Commission." ⁶¹⁻⁶⁶ In April, 1976, the SSC published its Final Report (Book V) which in essence faulted the CIA for its errors of omission in not informing the Warren Commission of the CIA's [on-going] plots against the revolutionary government in Cuba and its attempts on the life of the premier, Fidel Castro.

After reviewing the details of the CIA-Mafia plots, the SSC stated that "Castro probably would not have been certain that the CIA was behind the underworld attempts" and that it would have been unlikely that Castro would have distinguished the CIA plots with the underworld from any plots sponsored by the Cuban exile community and not

check into ←

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affiliated in any way with the CIA. (")?

The SSC identified the AMLASH operation, however, as being "clearly different" from the under-⁶³ world plots. The SSC stated that AMLASH was in progress at the time of the assassination, that it could clearly be traced to the CIA, and that AMLASH's proposal for a coup had been endorsed by the CIA, the initial step being the assassination of Castro.⁶⁴

The SSC cautioned, however, that it saw "no evidence that Fidel Castro or others in the Cuban government plotted President Kennedy's assassination in retaliation for U. S. operations against Cuba."⁶⁵⁻⁷⁰

NO

As related in the Introduction to this material, the SSC did not reach any conclusion because it believed additional investigation needed to occur.⁷¹⁻⁶⁶

J. The CIA 1977 ^{TASK FORCE (TFR)} ~~Proposed General~~ Report

Stung by the Senate criticism and the rippling effect that Book V caused in the media, the CIA prepared a comprehensive report in ¹⁹⁷⁷ ~~1976~~ designed to answer, at least within the CIA, the critical questions postulated in the SSC Final Report.

The ~~TFK~~ ^{TFK} identifies a principal theme of Book V as the possibility that Castro retaliated against the United States for attempts on his life and that the CIA operations may have specifically caused any such actions by Castro. ^{72 71} In responding to this theory the CIA decided to perform the following:

- 1) to conduct a full ⁰⁴ review of information and operations ^{is} the Cuban target to identify any activity that might relate to the assassination of President Kennedy, and
- 2) to review the possibility that CIA activities against Cuba did, by their nature, cause Castro to order the assassination of President Kennedy. ^{72 73}

The details of the ~~reason~~ ^{TFR} are thoroughly related in this material because no source has previously publicly released them.

1. Syndicate Operations

Before analyzing the AMLASH operations, the CIA first related new considerations pertaining to the syndicate operations. The ~~TFR~~ ^{TFR} refers to a series of articles written by Paul Meskill and appearing in the New York Daily News in April, 1975.

In these articles Meskill described how Frank Fiorini, ^{also} ~~was~~ known as Sturgis, allegedly

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recruited Marie Lorenz to spy on Castro. and
 how Sturgis knew ~~Juan Orta~~ and planned to use him
 in a bombing assassination of Castro. 75 193 Meskill
 asserted that Sturgis claimed he had been a hired
 operation for the CIA for at least a decade and that
 Sturgis was in touch with all the casino operators
 in Havana during the period of the Castro takeover. 194 76
 In another article on June 13, 1976, Meskill related
 the claim of Marie Lorenz that in the fall of 1960
 Frank Sturgis, acting for the CIA, gave her two
 capsules of poison powder which she was to sprinkle
 in some food or drink of Castro. 195 77

The writers of the ~~1977 FOR~~ TFR were quite concerned
 with ~~these~~ ~~their~~ assertions because ~~Orta's~~ name had
 publicly surfaced in connection with a Castro assassina-
 tion plot before the SSC ~~recording of~~ ^{revelation of Orta's role in} the CIA-
 organized crime plots, ~~and thus the assignment to~~
 poison ^{given} Castro gave to the "official case to Castro
 who may have received kickbacks from the gambling
 interests." The possibility that ~~Orta~~ was involved
 in assassination plots other than the CIA operation
 also attracted the attention of the CIA. 78

In reference to Sturgis' allegation that he had been a hired operator for the CIA for a decade the ~~1977-1978~~ ^{TFR} asserted that "he was in contact with some of the CIA Cuban employees in the Miami area, ¹⁹⁷⁻⁷⁹ but had no direct relationships with the Agency." The ~~1978~~ ^{TFR} recognizes that Sturgis, through his gambling activities and relationships with various casino owners, may quite possibly have known ~~Orta~~, and also raises the question of whether Sturgis may have been a source of information to Castro regarding ~~Orta's~~ participation in any assassination plot. ¹⁹⁸⁻⁸⁰

In reference to the Lorenz-Sturgis poison pill plot, the ~~1978~~ ^{TFR} noted the similarity of this plot to the details in the 18 October 1960 FBI ~~memo~~ ^{memorandum describing a plot to kill Castro} ¹⁹⁹. The CIA concluded that this October date is too early for the CIA syndicate operations and that therefore the syndicate may have been acting independently. ³¹⁻⁸²

The CIA also concluded that ~~Antonio de Verona~~, the Cuban exile leader active in the CIA syndicate operations, may have already been active in plots with the Mafia when the CIA approached him. ⁸²⁻⁸³

✓ The CIA cited two FBI memorandum as support.

First, a 21 December 1960 memorandum pertaining to underworld support for some Cubans, and second, a 18 January 1961 memorandum relating an unconfirmed report that ~~W. C. ...~~ was one of the Cubans receiving support. ^{83 24}

The CIA further acknowledged that although the operation with the Mafia was suspended after the Bay of Pigs, it appeared to still be in progress when re-activated in April, 1962. ^{84 85}

^{TFR} The ~~SSC~~ summarized its position concerning non-CIA sponsored syndicate operations in the following passage:

It is possible that CIA simply found itself involved in providing additional resources for independent operations that the syndicate already had underway... / I/W a sense CIA may have been piggy-backing on the syndicate and in addition to its material contribution was also supplying an aura of official sanction. ^{85 24}

2. AMLASH

^{TFR} The ~~SSC~~ states the SSC suggests that AMLASH was possibly a Castro agent assigned a provocation

