

## II. BACKGROUND FOR THE WARREN COMMISSION INVESTIGATION: CUBA AND THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

In assessing the performance of the intelligence agencies in investigating President John F. Kennedy's assassination, one of the focuses of the Select Committee's investigation was whether the Warren Commission was supplied all the information necessary to conduct the "thorough and independent investigation of the circumstances surrounding the assassination" which President Johnson had ordered. At the outset of its investigation, the Select Committee had evidence that the Warren Commission was not given information about CIA attempts to assassinate foreign leaders. As the Select Committee later discovered, the Warren Commission was also unaware of the full extent of the agencies' involvement in operations directed against Cuba. This section of the report summarizes aspects of those operations relevant to the Warren Commission's investigation.

On New Year's Day, 1959, Fidel Castro's forces overthrew the Batista regime and assumed control of the government of Cuba after a long revolutionary struggle which had received support from many within the United States. The subsequent actions of the Cuban Government, particularly its move toward Communism and alignment with the Soviet Union, gradually produced forces strongly opposed to Castro—forces which wanted his government out of Cuba.

Reports which the Select Committee has obtained from the intelligence agencies document the varying interests outside Cuba which opposed Castro. Perhaps foremost in the opposition to Castro were the thousands of Cubans who had fled Cuba after his takeover. The Cuban exiles in the United States formed a variety of organizations to voice their opposition to Castro. Some of these organizations not only voiced opposition, but also planned and executed paramilitary operations to harass the Castro government.

Many Americans outside the Cuban exile community opposed the Castro regime. To them, the Castro government represented a major move by the Soviet Union to spread Communism into the Western Hemisphere. To these people, halting Castro meant halting Communism.

Other less idealistic interests were also opposed to Castro. His communist government had expropriated the property of foreign businesses and Cubans who had fled Cuba. Removal of the Castro government was one way to regain their lost businesses and property. Other business interests opposed Castro because his control over the Cuban economy had a major effect on their own operations.

Finally, certain underworld interests were opposed to Castro. Before his take over, Cuba had been very important to these interests, but Castro had forced the underworld out. Removal of Castro likely meant these interests could return to Cuba.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to this strong anti-Castro sentiment in the private sector, the United States Government was pursuing a policy of opposition to the Castro regime. The precise government policy varied during the early 1960s as did the specific government action implementing that policy. Both planning and implementation of the policy involved almost all major departments of the Federal government, including the intelligence agencies.

The intelligence agencies had two primary responsibilities. All the intelligence agencies collected information on Cuban, pro-Castro, and anti-Castro activity. Their combined efforts resulted in an extensive intelligence network in Cuba, in other Caribbean countries, and in the United States, a network which reported on a wide range of matters. Second, the intelligence agencies, primarily the CIA, undertook covert operations against Cuba. The techniques utilized in these covert operations ranged from propaganda, to paramilitary action, and included the outright invasion at the Bay of Pigs. These operations were conducted not only through individuals directly employed by the agencies, but also through certain of the anti-Castro groups ostensibly independent of the intelligence agencies.

Obviously, it is difficult to discover the details of any intelligence operation, since intelligence operations were designed to prevent such discovery. Except in a few instances, the Select Committee has not attempted to unravel these operations, but has instead focused on the general nature of the operations.

In 1961 the President was forced to admit publicly that the Bay of Pigs invasion was an operation sponsored by the CIA. In November 1961, after a period of reappraisal following the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion, another approach to the Cuba problem, Operation MONGOOSE, was conceived. As described in more detail in the Select Committee's Report, "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, during the missile crisis, an FBI informant reported that "he believes he could arrange to have Fidel Castro assassinated . . . Underworld figures still have channels inside Cuba through which the assassination of Castro could be successfully arranged."

"He said that in the event the United States Government is interested in having the attempt made, he would raise the necessary money and would want nothing from the Government except the assurance that such an undertaking would in no way adversely affect the national security. He expressed confidence in his ability to accomplish this mission without any additional contact with Government representatives and with a minimum of contacts with private individuals."

The Bureau reported this contact to the Attorney General and concluded:

The informant was told that his offer is outside our jurisdiction, which he acknowledged. No commitments were made to him. At this time, we do not plan to further pursue the matter. Our relationship with him has been most carefully guarded and we would feel obligated to handle any recontact of him concerning this matter if such is desired. (Memorandum from Hoover to the Attorney General, 10/29/62.)

Leaders," MONGOOSE was to use Cuban exiles in operations designed to foment an internal revolution in Cuba.<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet-U.S. confrontation during the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, was a factor leading to another reappraisal of American policy toward Cuba. This resulted in Operation MONGOOSE being phased out and the Special Group (Augmented) ordering a halt to all sabotage operations.<sup>3</sup>

As the Assassination Report has detailed, from 1960 until 1962 the Central Intelligence Agency met regularly with underworld figures plotting the assassination of Fidel Castro. In early 1963, William Harvey, the CIA's contact to these underworld figures, told them the CIA was no longer interested in assassinating Castro.<sup>4</sup>

After the missile crisis, CIA operations against Cuba apparently decreased, while operations by Cuban exile groups on their own continued. On March 18, 1963, there was a reported attack on a Soviet vessel off the northern coast of Cuba by members of two exile groups, Alpha 66, and the Second National Front of Escambray.<sup>5</sup> There was another reported attack on a Soviet vessel off the northern coast of Cuba on the evening of March 26-27, 1963, by members of another anti-Castro group, Commandos L-66.<sup>6</sup>

This apparently caused considerable concern within the U.S. Government that such activity by Cuban exile groups could produce a confrontation with the Soviets.<sup>7</sup> One witness stated, "the whole apparatus of government, Coast Guard, Customs, Immigration and Naturalization, FBI, CIA, were working together to try to keep these operations from going to Cuba."<sup>8</sup>

These moves to restrict exile activities had an impact on New Orleans at the time Lee Harvey Oswald was living there. As reported

<sup>2</sup> "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders," 11/20/75, pp. 139-148, referred to hereinafter as the Assassination Report.

The Committee has discovered since the issuance of its Assassination Report that, in addition to the CIA and Department of Defense, the FBI was also consulted in MONGOOSE planning. In November 1961, the Bureau submitted its own five-point program of action against Castro, advocating strong support of rebel activity within Cuba. (Memorandum from Belmont to Tolson, 11/9/61.)

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum for the record from General Lansdale, 10/30/62.

<sup>4</sup> The Assassination Report discussed at length who knew of the CIA's assassination plots against Castro. So far as has been determined, knowledge of plots involving the underworld were known by a number of government officials outside the CIA. For example, FBI Director Hoover prepared a memorandum dated May 10, 1962, in which he recounted a private meeting he had with the Attorney General that day. Hoover noted:

Maheu had been hired by CIA to approach Giancana with a proposition of paying \$150,000 to hire some gunman to go into Cuba and kill Castro. He further stated that CIA admitted having assisted Maheu in making the bugging of Las Vegas.

A copy of this memorandum was disseminated to Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, Sullivan, and DeLoach.

<sup>5</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 3/29/63.

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum from J. Edgar Hoover to Director of Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, dated April 1, 1963. Subject: Anti-Castro Activities in the United States—Internal Security—Cuba-Neutrality Matters.

<sup>7</sup> Section Chief testimony, 5/11/76, pp. 19-22.

<sup>8</sup> Chief, JMWAVE testimony, 5/16/76, pp. 21, 22.

on page one of the New Orleans Times-Picayune on August 1, 1963, the FBI seized more than a ton of dynamite, 20 bomb casings, napalm material and other devices at a home in the New Orleans area on July 31. Newspaper interest in the seizure continued with prominent articles in the Times-Picayune on August 2 and August 4. The Warren Commission learned that, on August 5, Oswald contacted a Cuban exile in New Orleans, Carlos Bringuier, offering to help in training anti-Castro forces. Then on August 7, Oswald returned and left his Marine Corps training manual for Bringuier. Two days later, Bringuier saw Oswald handing out pro-Castro literature, which resulted in fighting and their arrest. Oswald subsequently appeared on a radio debate with Bringuier, again taking a pro-Castro position.<sup>9</sup>

Additional FBI reports provided to the Warren Commission detailed other facts connected to this anti-Castro activity in New Orleans at the time of Oswald's contact with Bringuier. On July 24, according to FBI reports, ten Cuban exiles arrived in New Orleans from Miami. These ten joined an existing group of exiles at a "training camp" north of New Orleans, which was directed by the same individuals who were involved in procuring the dynamite the FBI seized. By late July, some 28 Cuban exiles were at the training camp, allegedly awaiting transportation to Guatemala where they would work for a lumber company.

Some of those who owned the land on which the Cuban exiles were staying became concerned about the FBI interest in the anti-Castro activities and ordered them to leave. Carlos Bringuier was called upon to assist in getting this group back to Miami.<sup>10</sup>

Although this was the extent of the Warren Commission investigation of this incident, at least one FBI report, on the seizure of materials which was not provided the Warren Commission, raises additional questions about the purpose of Oswald's contact with Bringuier. Indeed, Bringuier himself believed Oswald was attempting to infiltrate the anti-Castro movement in order to report its activities to pro-Castro forces.<sup>11</sup>

A report of the Miami Office of the FBI revealed some of the information the FBI had on this incident:

On June 14, 1963, information was received that a group of Cuban exiles had a plan to bomb the Shell refinery in Cuba.

On June 15, 1963, United States Customs Agents seized a twin Beechcraft airplane on the outskirts of Miami, Florida, along with a quantity of explosives.

[ . . . , . . . , . . . , "A" and . . . , along with American . . . ] were involved and detained, but not arrested, by the United States Customs Agents. It was ascertained that [ . . . ] supplied the money and explosives for this operation. [He] is well known as a former gambling concession operator in Havana. . . .

On July 19, 1963, [ . . . ] advised there was another plan to bomb Cuba, using bomb casings and dynamite located on the outskirts of New Orleans, Louisiana.

<sup>9</sup> Warren Report, pp. 407, 408.

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum from New Orleans Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 5/15/64.

<sup>11</sup> Warren Report, Vol. X, pp. 43-45.

On July 31, 1963, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at New Orleans, Louisiana, obtained a search warrant and seized 2,400 pounds of dynamite and 20 bomb casings near Lacombe, Louisiana. This material was located on the property of [. . .] brother of [. . .], [of] Miami Beach . . . and former operator of a casino in the Nacional Hotel, Havana, Cuba.

Investigation determined that this dynamite was purchased at Collinsville, Illinois, by ["B"] for "A", who was involved in the June 14, 1963, seizures at Miami. "A" transported the dynamite to New Orleans in a rented trailer. Also involved in this bomb plot were . . .

[. . .] advised on June 14, 1963, "B" of Collinsville, Illinois, recently arrived in Miami, Florida, in a Ford station wagon with a load of arms for sale. American adventurers and mercenaries, [. . .] and [. . .] took "B" around to meet the different Cuban exile leaders in Miami. . . ."<sup>12</sup>

On another occasion, an intelligence agency conducted a sensitive operation which developed information on the location of arms caches and training camps in another country. That information was given to the other country, which then raided the camps and seized the materials. Raids and seizures such as these apparently were commonplace throughout the summer and fall of 1963.<sup>13</sup> Those individuals apparently sponsoring this activity were angered by these raids and seizures.

Reports in the files of the intelligence agencies in mid-1963, document a series of meetings among major leaders of the anti-Castro movement.<sup>14</sup> These reports indicate that some of these leaders claimed the support of the United States Government.

Whether these were in fact related to decisions by the U.S. Government is not known, but such meetings followed the June 1963 decision of the Special Group to step up various covert operations designed to encourage dissident groups inside Cuba, to worsen economic conditions in the country, and to cause Cubans to doubt the ability of the Castro regime to defend the country.<sup>15</sup>

Contemporaneously, the CIA took steps to renew its contact with a high-level Cuban official code named AMLASH. The CIA's previous contact with him had been sporadic; he had not been in direct contact with the CIA since before the missile crisis of October 1962. The exact purpose the CIA had for renewing contact is unknown, but there is no evidence the CIA intended at this time to use AMLASH in an assassination operation.

On August 16, 1963, the Chicago Sun Times carried an article claiming that the CIA had dealings with an underworld figure, Sam Giancana. This prompted Director McCone to ask the Deputy Director for Plans, Richard Helms, for a report about the article. McCone testified that Helms gave him a memorandum on the CIA operation

<sup>12</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 10/3/63.

<sup>13</sup> Intelligence officer's testimony, 5/10/64, pp. 21-24, 26.

<sup>14</sup> For example, memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 10/18/63, pp. 5-10.

<sup>15</sup> Memorandum for the Special Group, 6/19/63.

involving Giancana and orally informed him that it involved assassination on August 16.<sup>16</sup>

Within weeks of Helms' report to the DCI, CIA case officers held their first 1963 meeting with AMLASH. Although before this meeting CIA's interest in AMLASH may have been to gain intelligence and to cultivate him as an asset for covert operations, the case officers learned that AMLASH was interested primarily in getting the United States to invade Cuba, or in attempting an "inside job" against Castro, and that he was awaiting a U.S. plan of action.<sup>17</sup> This was communicated to CIA Headquarters on September 7.

Late in the evening of September 7, Premier Castro held an impromptu, three-hour interview with Associated Press reporter Daniel Harker and in that interview warned against the United States "aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders." He stated, according to Harker, United States leaders would be in danger if they helped in any attempt to do away with leaders of Cuba. "We are prepared to fight them and answer in kind. United States leaders should think that if they are aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be safe." He added: "Yet the CIA and other dreamers believe their hopes of an insurrection or a successful guerrilla war. They can go on dreaming forever."<sup>18</sup>

Of course, discussions among Cuban exiles regarding the assassination of Castro were common among the more militant Cuban exiles.

... "assassination" was part of the ambience of that time ... nobody could be involved in Cuban operations without having had some sort of a discussion at some time with some Cuban who said . . . the way to create a revolution is to shoot Fidel and Raul . . . so the fact that somebody would talk about assassination just wasn't anything really out of the ordinary at that time.<sup>19</sup>

One FBI report on a Cuban exile organization reported an exile group meeting in August 1963. A military officer from a Latin American country was there:

[He] acted tough, talking about assassinations and left no doubt he is a military man. He offered training camps, military equipment, and military bases from which Cuba could be attacked. He spoke very derogatorily of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and explained that his proposed operations had the sanction and support of top United States military officials.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Assassination Report, p. 107.

<sup>17</sup> Characterization of this phase of the AMLASH operation is disputed. The Assassination Report concluded this was an assassination operation, but several CIA officials involved do not agree with this conclusion. However, the CIA case officer for this operation agreed that AMLASH himself believed assassination was the first step of any coup in Cuba and the CIA met with him on that basis.

<sup>18</sup> This account of the interview appeared in the Miami Herald, p. 1A, September 9, 1963. While other major newspapers carried the story, some did not include Premier Castro's warning.

<sup>19</sup> Chief, JMWAVE testimony, 5/6/76, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum from Miami Field Office to FBI Headquarters, 8/19/63.

The Committee found no evidence to support such a claim of support by American military officers.

Castro's September 7 statement could have been referring to information he had received relating to such assassination plots hatched by exile leaders. In addition there were paramilitary raids on Cuba by exile groups shortly before Castro's interview. However, Castro's warning about the safety of "U.S. leaders . . . aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders" suggests he was aware of some activity attributable to the U.S. Government.<sup>21</sup>

At this time review and approval of covert operations against Cuba were the responsibility of the National Security Council's Special Group, chaired by McGeorge Bundy. Responsibility for developing covert action proposals was delegated to an Interagency Cuban Coordinating Committee chaired by a Coordinator from the State Department.<sup>22</sup>

On September 12, only three days after the Associated Press story about Castro's September 7 warning to U.S. leaders was carried in American newspapers, the Cuban Coordinating Committee met. The purpose of this meeting, was to conduct a broad review of the U.S. Government's Cuban contingency plans and to come up with an endorsement or modification of the existing plans. Specifically the Committee, according to this memorandum, unanimously agreed:

that there was a strong likelihood that Castro would retaliate in some way against the rash of covert activity in Cuba. At the same time, the Coordinator emphasized that it was his view that any Castro retaliation will be at a low level and not along a track which would precipitate a direct confrontation with the United States.<sup>23</sup>

The Coordinator, again according to this memorandum, referred to the meeting as a "brainstorming" session. This memorandum listed the possible retaliatory actions Cuba might undertake.

4. Actions against U.S. targets in Latin America employing Castro allied forces.

(c) Increased attempts at kidnaping or attempts at assassination of American officials or citizens. (Likely)

5. Actions against targets in the U.S.

- (a) Sabotage or terrorist bombings. (Unlikely)
- (b) *Attacks against U.S. officials.* (Unlikely)
- (c) Cuban controlled raids by unmarked boats or aircraft in the Keys. (Unlikely)
- (d) Jammings of U.S. radio stations. (Likely)<sup>24</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The individual who was the CIA "point of record" for working with the Warren Commission wrote in 1975:

There can be no question from the facts surrounding the Castro appearance, which had not been expected, and his agreement to the interview, that this event represented a more-than-ordinary attempt to get a message on the record in the United States. (CIA memorandum, 5/23/75.) A CIA analyst on Cuban affairs reached a similar conclusion. (Briefing of Select Committee staff. 1/7/76.)

<sup>22</sup> Assassination Report, p. 170.

<sup>23</sup> Memorandum for the Record, by DOD representative, 9/13/63. Subject: Minutes of Cuban Coordinating Committee meeting held at Department of State, 1430 hours, 12 September 1963.

The memorandum concluded by noting the Coordinator had stated that the State Department would provide a list of the most significant Castro actions on Friday, September 13, and expect comment by September 17 from the members. The next meeting was scheduled for September 18.

On September 13, 1963, the Coordinator circulated a list of "those possible retaliatory actions by the Cuban Government which we agreed at our meeting of September 12 represent situations which have priority in a review of our contingency planning."<sup>25</sup> The list of possible actions included: "Actions against U.S. Targets in Latin America Through Castro-Allied Forces . . . Increased Attempts at Kidnapping or Attempts at Assassination of American Officials or Citizens." It also included a category "Actions Against Targets in the U.S." While the Committee decided at its September 12 meeting that sabotage or terrorist bombing was an unlikely action, that possibility was included in the September 13 list. The possibility of "Attacks Against U.S. Official" was not included in the September 13 list.

On September 27, 1963, the Coordinator of Cuban Affairs prepared a memorandum listing assignments for contingency papers relating to possible retaliatory actions by the Castro regime.<sup>26</sup> The Subcommittee on Cuban Subversion was directed to submit papers on the possible increased attempts at kidnapping or attempts at assassination of American officials or citizens by October 4. The memorandum noted: "This exercise will be part of the Subcommittee's study of measures to meet general intensification by Castro regime of subversive efforts in Latin America."<sup>27</sup>

Possible attacks against U.S. officials in the United States was not considered a likely contingency at the September 12 meeting and so the September 27 memorandum gave no agency responsibility for that contingency. With regard to "sabotage or terroristic bombings against U.S. territory," the assignment was given to the Justice representative to "bring Coordinating Committee's views to the attention of the FBI."<sup>28</sup>

The available information indicates that the CIA Special Affairs Staff which was responsible for Cuban operations, was, as an organizational entity both plotting with AMLASH and at the very same time participating in this interagency review of contingency plans for possible Cuban retaliation.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, SAS as an organizational entity,

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* (Emphasis added)

<sup>25</sup> Memorandum to the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee of Cuban Affairs, from Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, 9/13/63, re: Possible Retaliatory Actions by Castro Government.

<sup>26</sup> Memorandum to the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee of Cuban Affairs, from Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, 9/27/63. Subject: Contingency Paper Assignments re Possible Retaliatory Actions by Castro Government.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Because the Select Committee staff only recently discovered the documents discussed above, it has had no opportunity to question the persons who prepared them or who attended these meetings. The Select Committee staff has requested a number of agencies to provide photo copies of all documents on the Cuban Coordinating Committee, including documents on the possibility of retaliation and is awaiting a response from these agencies. The Committee staff has been told informally that the CIA representatives on this Committee were from its Special Affairs Staff.

had knowledge that the interagency committee had concluded "Cuban attack against U.S. officials within the United States" was an unlikely response to the rash of covert activity in Cuba. Nevertheless, either during or shortly after completion of the review of possible retaliatory actions, SAS made the decision to escalate the level of CIA covert activity directed against Cuba.

Meetings between CIA case officers and AMLASH continued after this review.<sup>30</sup> At one such meeting, AMLASH was told his proposal (a coup, the first step of which was the assassination of Fidel Castro) was under consideration at the "highest levels". The case officer who made this representation testified he only intended to refer to the highest levels of the CIA.<sup>31</sup>

In response to this representation, AMLASH requested a personal meeting with Robert Kennedy to obtain his assurance of U.S. support. Instead, the CIA sent Desmond Fitzgerald, the senior CIA officer who headed the Special Affairs Staff, which was the CIA section charged with responsibility for Cuban affairs, to meet AMLASH on October 29, 1963.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> The security of the AMLASH operation as of October 1963 was very dubious. CIA files contain several reports in this time period which raise questions about the security of the operation. The Chief of SAS Counterintelligence testified he always doubted the security of the operation.

Moreover, although the CIA did not inform the FBI about the AMLASH operation, and in fact the code-name, AMLASH, was unknown to the FBI, the FBI on October 10, 1963, received a report from an informant that a certain Cuban official was meeting with the CIA. The Cuban official identified by his true name in that report is in fact AMLASH. This report was not passed to the CIA, although the fact the FBI had learned the CIA was meeting with AMLASH might have prompted the CIA to scrutinize the security of the AMLASH operation.

<sup>31</sup> AMLASH Case Officer, 2/11/76, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Two CIA officials have testified they advised Fitzgerald not to meet personally with AMLASH. The Chief of JMWAVE Station testified:

My advice to [Fitzgerald] was that it would probably not be a good idea for [Fitzgerald] to meet with [AMLASH] . . . the only thing I could see coming out of the contact would be that . . . Fitzgerald would get a feel for what makes some of these people tick . . . and that probably was too high a price to pay for the prospect if anything went wrong, an individual as prominent in Washington, both within the Agency and in the social world in Washington [as Fitzgerald] would be exposed in the press. That would create a flap that I thought was not worth what would be gained from the meeting.

(Chief, JMWAVE testimony, 8/19/75, p. 80; see also his testimony, 5/6/76, pp. 45-46.)

The Chief of Counterintelligence for the SAS testified he thought the operation was "nonsense" and "counterproductive" and that AMLASH's "bona fides were subject to question."

I disagreed basically with whole thrust of the AMLASH operation. My disapproval of it was very strong. Des Fitzgerald knew it . . . and preferred not to discuss it anymore with me.

(Chief, SAS/CI testimony, 5/10/76, pp. 21-23.)

However, the Executive Officer for Desmond Fitzgerald dismissed the possibility that Fitzgerald's meeting with AMLASH exposed the CIA to possible embarrassment because Fitzgerald had not used his real name and, therefore, AMLASH would have been unable to identify Fitzgerald as a CIA officer. (Executive officer testimony, 4/22/76, p. 55.)

Fitzgerald used an alias and was introduced to AMLASH as a "personal representative" of Attorney General Kennedy.<sup>33</sup>

According to the case officer's report on the October 29 meeting, Fitzgerald told AMLASH that the United States was not prepared to support an isolated uprising. According to this report, Fitzgerald told AMLASH that the United States was prepared to provide support only after a real coup had been effected, and the group involved was in a position to request U.S. recognition and support. The memorandum goes on to say :

Nothing of an operational nature was discussed at the Fitzgerald meeting. After the meeting [AMLASH] stated that he was satisfied with the policy discussion but now desired to know what technical support we could provide him.<sup>34</sup>

Whether AMLASH interpreted this meeting as CIA endorsement of his proposal to initiate the coup by assassination is not clear. When interviewed by the CIA Inspector General staff in 1967, Fitzgerald, who is now dead, said that AMLASH spoke of the need for an assassination weapon, specifically, a high-powered rifle with telescopic sights or some other weapon which could be used to assassinate Castro from a distance. Fitzgerald said he rejected this request and ordered the case officer, who served as interpreter, to tell AMLASH the United States simply did not do such things.<sup>35</sup> Fitzgerald's executive officer, who was not at the meeting but was fully briefed on the AMLASH operation, also told the Inspector General staff that Fitzgerald had rejected AMLASH's request.<sup>36</sup>

Fitzgerald's recollection of this meeting is supported by a CIA memorandum of a conversation with AMWHIP, a Cuban exile who had talked to AMLASH after this October 29 meeting. According to that memorandum, the meeting satisfied AMLASH as far as policy was concerned :

but he was not at all happy with the fact that he still was not given the technical assistance for the operational plan as he saw it. He could not understand why he was denied certain small pieces of equipment which permitted a final solution to the problem, while, on the other hand, the U.S. Government gave much equipment and money to exile groups for their ineffective excursions.<sup>37</sup>

Fitzgerald's recollection of the October 29 meeting conflicts with the case officer's sworn testimony before the Select Committee in 1975 and 1976. The case officer, who was also the interpreter for Fitzgerald,

<sup>33</sup> The Committee found no evidence that the Attorney General authorized, or was aware of this representation. Helms testified he did not seek the Attorney General's approval because he thought it was "unnecessary." (Helms, 6/13/75, pp. 117-118.)

<sup>34</sup> Case officer's Memorandum for Record, 11/13/63.

<sup>35</sup> 1967 Inspector General Report, p. 90.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> CIA Memorandum for the Record, 11/14/63.

testified that Fitzgerald gave assurances that the United States not only would support the government which emerged after a successful coup, but also gave general assurances that the United States would help in bringing about that coup.<sup>37a</sup> The case officer testified that he recalled no discussion of what specific support the CIA would give and he did not recall Fitzgerald saying the U.S. would have no part of assassination.

Q. Was it also clear that in some way or other Fitzgerald was promising that support would be given for the planning of a coup operation as you have said, which was not contingent on whether the operation was successful or not?

A. That was implied, definitely, that support would be given, and again, I repeat, AMLASH did interpret it that way.<sup>37b</sup>

The case officer returned to Headquarters sometime in November. By November 19, Fitzgerald had told the case officer that he was authorized to tell AMLASH that the rifles, telescopic sights, and explosives would be provided. The case officer also waited at Headquarters while a ballpoint pen was fashioned with a needle on it which could be used to inject a lethal dose of poison. The pen proved difficult to fashion and it was not ready until a few days before the November 22 meeting. The exact purpose the CIA had for offering AMLASH the pen is discussed in detail in the Assassination Report.<sup>38</sup>

On November 19, AMLASH told a CIA officer that he planned to return to Cuba immediately.<sup>38a</sup> On November 20, 1963, a CIA officer telephoned AMLASH and asked him to postpone his return to Cuba in order to attend a meeting on November 22. AMLASH asked if the meeting would be interesting, and the CIA officer responded he did not know whether it would be interesting but it was the meeting AMLASH had requested.<sup>38b</sup>

At earlier meetings with the CIA, AMLASH had only received general assurances of U.S. support for a coup plan and thus the November 20 telephone call was the first indication that he might receive the specific support he requested. Of course, AMLASH could not have known with certainty what support, i.e., weapons, he would receive until November 22.

The case officer met with AMLASH on November 22, 1963. At that meeting, the case officer referred to the President's November 18 speech in Miami as an indication that the President supported a coup. That speech described the Castro government as a "small band of conspirators" which formed a "barrier" which "once removed" would

<sup>37a</sup> Case officer's testimony, 7/29/75, pp. 77-80.

<sup>37b</sup> Case officer testimony, 7/29/75, pp. 79-80.

<sup>38</sup> Assassination Report, pp. 88-89.

<sup>38a</sup> CIA cable to Headquarters, 11/19/63.

<sup>38b</sup> CIA cable to Headquarters, 11/20/63.

ensure United States support for progressive goals in Cuba.<sup>39</sup> The case officer told AMLASH that Fitzgerald had helped write the speech.<sup>40</sup>

The case officer also told AMLASH that explosives and rifles with telescopic sights<sup>41</sup> would be provided. The case officer showed AMLASH the poison pen and suggested he could use the commercial poison, Black Leaf-40 in it.<sup>42</sup> The case officer cannot recall specifically what happened to the poison pen; he does not believe AMLASH carried it with him when he left the meeting. He does recall that AMLASH was dissatisfied with the device. As AMLASH and the case officer broke up their meeting, they were told the President had been assassinated.

Two other events which occurred in the October-November 1963 time period should be noted in this discussion of U.S.-Cuban relations. The first is that talks between the Cuban delegate to the UN, La Chuga, and a U.S. delegate, William Atwood, were proposed by the Cubans on September 5. Although there were discussions about the location for such talks and Atwood's expressed U.S. interest, no concrete plans for meetings were made. On November 29, La Chuga inquired again of Atwood about U.S. interest in talks.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Washington Post, 11/19/63, p. A-15.

<sup>40</sup> Case Officer testimony, 2/11/76.

The fact that the CIA intended President Kennedy's speech to serve as a signal to dissident elements in Cuba that the U.S. would support a coup is confirmed by a CIA paper, completed less than two weeks after Kennedy's assassination, which suggested statements the Johnson administration could make which would "stimulate anti-Castro action on the part of dissident elements in the Cuban armed forces." The paper states that Cuban dissidents

must have solemn assurances from high level U.S. spokesmen, especially the President, that the United States will exert its decisive influence during and immediately after the coup. . . .

Citing Kennedy's speech of November 18, 1963, the CIA paper concluded ". . . it remains for President [Johnson] and other administration spokesmen to instill a genuine sense of U.S. commitment to our efforts." (Memorandum for the DCI, "Considerations for U.S. Policy Toward Cuba and Latin America," 12/9/63.)

<sup>41</sup> The Chief of JMWAVE testified that although this operation often was tasked to get weapons into Cuba, he could not recall being tasked to get rifles and telescopic sights into Cuba. The documentary record reveals, however, that the JMWAVE station was tasked to supply the explosives, rifles, and telescopic sights to AMLASH. The Chief of the JMWAVE station testified he did not recall seeing the cable containing these instructions.

Q. Was it common to drop caches of rifles or telescopic sights for agents?

A. I would not necessarily have known what was in each cache.

Q. Well, was it common . . . , to your knowledge, to drop rifles with telescopic sights?

A. Well, I think the thing that would be uncommon would be telescopic sights. Many of our caches were weapons caches. . . . I think if I were looking at a cache list and I saw a telescope on it matched up with a Springfield '03 rifle, that probably would have struck me as being unusual, but I did not see the inventories of all the caches.

(Chief, JMWAVE testimony, 5/6/76, pp. 47-48.)

<sup>42</sup> Assassination Report, p. 89; Case Officer testimony, 2/11/76, p. 46.

<sup>43</sup> Assassination Report, pp. 173-174; William Atwood testimony, 7/10/75, p. 9.

Second, the French reporter, Jean Daniel, had a brief interview with President Kennedy on October 24, before setting off on an assignment in Cuba. At that meeting the President expressed his feeling that Castro had betrayed the revolution.<sup>44</sup>

Daniel travelled to Cuba but got no hint of a similar meeting with Castro. Then on November 19, the day after the President's speech in Miami, Castro contacted Daniel and spent six hours talking to him about U.S.-Cuban relations. Daniel again met Castro on November 22, spending most of the day with him. Daniel's report of this meeting, "When Castro Heard the News," describes Castro's reaction to word of the assassination. After word that President Johnson had been sworn in reached Castro, he asked: "What authority does he exercise over the CIA?"<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Daniel, "Unofficial Envoy: A Historic Report from Two Capitals," *New Republic*, 12/14/63.

<sup>45</sup> Daniel, "When Castro Heard the News," *New Republic*, 12/7/63.

