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I do not know whether you informed yourself about the magnitude of our political action program at the time--absolutely enormous.

We were trying to follow the Soviets and all the satellites and the Cubans. At the same time, the main thrust of the Station's effort was to attempt to recruit Russians, Cubans and satellite people. 658/

Perhaps the nature of the CIA Mexico City Station's handling of the Oswald case prior to the assassination can best be summed up in Dave Phillips' response when he was asked how he would characterize that handling:

"At the very best, it is not professional, at the best." 659/

V. Mexico City Station Reporting of Information Concerning Oswald After the Assassination

A. Reporting of information concerning the photograph of the Mexico Mystery Man

Even though some people in the Station clearly disassociated the photograph that was described in MEXI 6453 from Oswald after receiving the 10/11 cable, 656/ it is clear that some people still considered it possible for some reason that the photograph was of Oswald. In October, Ann Goodpasture had argued this very point with Winston Scott. 657/ On the day of the assassination, the Mexico City Station cabled Headquarters that it was sending

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as soon as possible "copies of only visitor to

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Sovemb 28 Oct who could be identical with Oswald." 658/

The date was later corrected to read 1 October. 659/

Mr. Scott was not the only person in the Mexico Station who still thought that the photo could possibly be

Oswald. [CIA CI] testified on this point.

Q: As of the day of the assassination, you thought that there was still a possibility that there was a photograph of Oswald?

A: Indeed. As I recall, we tried to get that photograph to headquarters as fast as we could. As it turned out it wasn't necessary to send it. But tat was our intention. 660/

The photograph was sent to Dallas where Special Agent Odum of the FBI showed it to Mrs. Marguerite Oswald on 23 November 1963. 661/ Mrs. Oswald would later claim it was a photograph of Jack Ruby, 662/ beginning a period of controversy and uncertainty about this photograph that has continued to this day. The interaction of the Warren Commission and the CIA on this question is detailed in another section of this report. On 23 November Mexico informed Headquarters that "It obvious photos sent to Dallas were not iden with Lee Oswald." 663/ Since the time of the assassination, this man has been identified as Yuriy Ivanovich Moskalev, a Soviet KGB officer. The identification is unconfirmed and comes from only one source. 664/

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In any case, it is unlikely that this man had any connection with Oswald outside of the mistaken belief of several CIA officers in Mexico. 665/

B. Reporting of information concerning Lee Harvey Oswald from the electronic intercept operation aimed at the Soviet Embassy

The first cable that Mexico sent to Headquarters after the assassination referred Headquarters to the cable traffic concerning Oswald that had occurred prior to the assassination. 666/ Headquarters replied that they had also noted the "connection." 667/

The cable traffic on the day of the assassination, and the early traffic from the following day, deal almost exclusively with the photograph of the person who later became known as the Mexico Mystery Man. The first cable 668/ obviously referred to the October 1 contact and brought it to Headquarters' attention by referring Headquarters to MEXI 6453. The first cable that specifically refers to the transcripts occurred on the following day. Headquarters cabled Mexico that it was important that the station review all transcripts

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"since 27 September to locate all material possibly pertinent." 669/ The cable went on to instruct the station to send the full transcripts and original tapes to Headquarters by special courier. 670/ The cable also asks if the original tapes are still available. 671/

This Committee has not been able to determine how the CIA Headquarters knew, on 23 November 1963, that a review of the tap material should begin with the production from 27 September, the day Oswald first appeared at the Soviet and Cuban Embassies. There is no record that Headquarters had been informed of the 9/27 visits prior to this cable having been sent. It is possible, as some witnesses have suggested, that his information was provided to CIA Headquarters by the FBI in Washington. 672/ If that is the case then it merely shifts the question: This may indicate that the CIA Headquarters was aware of the 9/27 visits prior to the assassination. An even stronger inference is that they were aware of those visits at least by the day after the assassination. The manner in which they learned of these visits by that date has not been determined. It is possible that Headquarters was informed

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by telephone. Even though witnesses generally denied that there was telephone communication between Mexico City and Headquarters at the time of the assassination, there is strong evidence that there was such communication on at least two instances. 673/

As will become evident, the transcripts were cabled to headquarters that same day. It is not clear why Headquarters asked that the transcripts and tapes, if they existed, be sent to Headquarters by special courier as opposed to cabling the transcripts which would have been faster. 674/ There is no record that indicates that these transcripts of Oswald's calls were sent to Headquarters by special courier.

On the 23rd, the Mexico City Station reported all of the substantive Oswald conversations to Headquarters by cable. Logically, one would expect that since the circumstantial evidence indicates that these conversations were linked to Oswald prior to the assassination, that they would all have been reported in one cable, especially in light of the request from Headquarters in DIR 84886. 675/ At this point, according to the files and records made available to the HSCA staff by the CIA, the Mexico City Station had informed Headquarters of

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only the 9/28 and the 10/1/10:45 conversations. It should be noted that the 10/1/10:45 conversation makes reference to the fact that Oswald was also at the Embassy on 9/28. The next cable that Mexico City sent to Headquarters said, in part, "Other than info already sent re Oswald's connection with Sov and Cuban Embs, no other info available." 675/ The next cable reports a literal transcription of the 9/28 and 10/1/10:45 conversations. 677/ The next cable that refers to the transcripts of Oswald's conversations reports the 9/27/10:30 call, the 9.27/4:05 call, the 9.27/4:26 call, the 10/1/10:31 call, and the 10/3 call. 678/ With this cable Mexico City informed Headquarters of all the substantive information available from the Soviet Embassy electronic surveillance. 679/

Mexico City also informed Headquarters on 11/24/64 that the tapes from the period in which Oswald had visited the Soviet and Cuban Embassies had been ^{be-}erased. 680/ A cable on the previous day had informed Headquarters that it was "probable" that the Oswald tapes had been erased. 681/ An earlier cable that same day reported that "Station unable compare voice as first tape erased

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prior receipt of second call." 682/ This would imply that the tape of the 28 September conversation, which may not have been received at the station until the 30th or the 1st of October, was destroyed before the tape of the conversation on the 1st of October was received in the station on that same day. In light of the standard operating procedures in effect in the station at that time, that possibility is highly unlikely. 683/

In view of what is now known about the standard operating procedures and about the Station's actions prior to the assassination, the Station's confusing and somewhat contradictory reporting after the assassination is strange. 684/ It is possible that these confusions and contradictions arose out of the crisis atmosphere at the station and the rush to report information. This Committee has not found any solid evidence that there were sinister qualities in the reporting after the assassination.

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C. Silvia Duran

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When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, the United States investigative agencies--FBI, CIA, Secret Service, etc.--were asked to investigate the assassination. When the Central Intelligence Agency's Mexico City Station remembered that Lee Harvey Oswald had visited Mexico City during late September and early October, it reviewed the electronic surveillance files and found evidence of phone calls to the Soviet Embassy made September 27th, September 28th, and October 1st, that could have been made by Oswald. 685/ Review of the electroic surveillance files also produced telephone calls on September 27, 1963 between the Russian Consul and Silvia Duran, a secretary at the Cuban Consulate, where Oswald was discussed. 686/ In addition, the Mexico City Station found a September 28, 1963 phone call from Silvia Duran to the Soviet Consulate where Silvia Duran stated that there was an American citizen at the Cuban Consulate who had previously visited the Soviet Consulate. 687/ A final phone call was made on October 1, 1963 where the "alleged" Oswald identified himself was also found. 688/

On November 23, 1963 the Mexico City Station deter-

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mined that it would request the Mexican government--
with whom it had a good relationship--to arrest Silvia
Duran (as Silvia Duran was a Mexican citizen, she did not
have diplomatic immunity) because she might shed some light
on the circumstances surrounding the assassination. 688a/

The Mexico City Station sent a note to the Gober-
nacion head, Luis Echevarria, with Silvia Duran's address,
her mother's address, her brother's address, her license
plate number, her home phone number, her place of work and
a request that she be arrested immediately. 689/ The Mexi-
co City Station also suggested that Duran be held incommuni-
cado until she could be questioned on the matter. 690/

The Mexico City Station did not receive prior au-
thorization from CIA Headquarters to request the arrest of
Silvia Duran by Mexican authorities. 691/ Headquarters
feared that a request to arrest Ms. Duran would jeopardize
the clandestine relationship between certain Mexican govern-
ment officials and the CIA if it were disclosed that Americans
were behind Duran's arrest. 692/ John Scelso, Chief of Western
Hemisphere/3, stationed at Langley Headquarters, telephoned
Winston Scott, the Mexico City Chief of Station, and requested
that Silvia Duran not be arrested. 693/ Scott told Scelso that
he could not rescind the request, and that Headquarters should
already have received a cable stating that Silvia Duran had

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been arrested. 694/ After Winston Scott's conversation with John Scelso, Scott called Luis Echevarria and stated that the Mexico City Station desired that all information received from Duran be forwarded immediately to the Mexico City Station, and that her arrest and statements not be communicated to any leftist groups. 695/

On November 27, 1963, the Mexican government forwarded to the Mexico City Station a copy of Silvia Duran's ten-page signed statement. 696/ It said,

"Upon learning about the assassination she and her husband speculated that President Kennedy might have been assassinated for racial reasons. When she became aware that the assassin was Lee Harvey Oswald, she ascertained that it was the same man who approximately two months prior had been to the Cuban Consulate to solicit an intransit visa to Russia. Having taken his name from the special documentation he presented she knew that he was married to a Russian woman and belonged to the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee." She checked the data in the Consulate archives and became certain that it was the same individual who was blonde, short, dressed unelegantly and whose face turned red when angry. The Consul had denied the visa because to obtain an intransit visa from the Cuban government, it was imperative that he previously obtain a visa from the Soviet Consulate. Since obtaining a visa from the Soviets took four months and Oswald's Mexican visa expired soon Oswald was advised that he see the Soviet Consul, and calling the person in charge of that office. The Soviet official told her that they would have to consult Moscow which would take four months. That afternoon, Oswald returned to the

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Cuban Consulate and Silvia Duran confirmed that he could get a Cuban visa only after he received a Russian visa. She gave Oswald her name and business phone number but never gave him her address because she had no reason to give it to him. The only aid she could give Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul and calling the person in charge of that office. She knew that phoning the Soviet Consulate was not one of her duties and that if she did so she did it only to help Oswald. She gave Oswald her business phone number only because he would have to call subsequently to check whether he had obtained a visa. He never called back."

Silvia Duran, released on November 24, 1963, was rearrested November 27, 1963, when the Mexican government alleged that she was attempting to leave Mexico for travel to Havana. 698/ According to the Mexican officials who detained Duran a second time, there was no addition to her story. 699/

The Mexico City Station forwarded Duran's ten-page signed statement to Headquarters on November 27, 1963. 700/ The following day, Headquarters sent a clarification cable to the Mexico City Station seeking to insure that neither Silvia Duran nor the Cubans would have any basis for believing that the Americans were behind her rearrest. The cable stated, "We want the Mexican authorities to take the responsibility for the whole affair." 701/

When the Central Intelligence Agency began to work with the Warren Commission, Headquarters cabled the Mexico

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City Station that its plan in passing information to the Warren Commission was to eliminate mention of telephone taps in order to protect their continuing operations. 702/ Headquarters cabled that it would rely on Silvia Duran's statements and on the Consular files which the Soviets gave the State Department. 703/ Headquarters stressed that exact, detailed information from LI[crypt] and LI[crypt] penetration agents in the Cuban Embassy--on what Silvia Duran and other officials had said about Oswald's visit and his dealings would be valuable and usable corroborative evidence. 704/

When the Central Intelligence Agency forwarded to the Warren Commission a copy of Duran's signed statement. It read as follows:

...she remembered..(that Lee Harvey Oswald) was the name of an American who had come to the Cuban Consulate to obtain a visa to travel to Cuba in transit to Russia, the latter part of September or the early part of October of this year, and in support of his application had shown his passport, in which it was noted that he had lived in that country for a period of three years; his labor card from the same country written in the Russian language; and letters in that same language. He had presented evidence that he was married to a Russian woman, and also that he was apparently the leader of an organization in the city of New Orleans claiming that he should be accepted as a "friend" of the Cuban Revolution. Accordingly, the declarant, complying with her duties, took down all of the

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information and completed the appropriate application form; and the declarant, admittedly exceeding her responsibilities, informally telephoned the Russian Consulate, with the intention of doing what she could to facilitate issuance of the Russian visa to Lee Harvey Oswald. However, they told her that there would be a delay of about four months in processing the case, which annoyed the applicant since, according to his statement, he was in a great hurry to obtain visas that would enable him to travel to Russia, insisting on his right to do so in view of his background and his loyalty and his activities in behalf of the Cuban movement. The declarant was unable to recall accurately whether or not the applicant told her he was a member of the Communist Party, but he did say that his wife*** was then in New York City, and would follow him,*** (Senora Duran stated) that when Oswald understood that it was not possible to give him a Cuban visa without his first having obtained the Russian visa,*** he became very excited or angry, and accordingly, the affiant called Consul Ascue (sic),*** (who) came out and began a heated discussion in English with Oswald, that concluded by Ascue telling him that "if it were up to him, he would not give him the visa," and "a person of his type was harming the Cuban Revolution rather than helping it," it being understood that in their conversation they were talking about the Russian Socialist Revolution and not the Cuban. Oswald maintained that he had two reasons for requesting that his visa be issued promptly, and they were: one, that his tourist permit in Mexico was about to expire; and the other, that he had to get to Russia as quickly as possible. Despite her annoyance, the declarant gave Oswald a paper*** in which she put down her name, "Silvia Duran," and the number of the telephone at the Consulate, which is "11-28-47" and the visa application

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was processed anyway. It was sent to the Ministry of (Foreign) Relations of Cuba; from which a routine reply was received some fifteen to thirty days later, approving the visa, but on the condition that the Russian visa be obtained first, although she does not recall whether or not Oswald later telephoned her at the Consulate number that she gave him. 705/

The Central Intelligence Agency had relied on Duran's statements but had deleted Duran's description of Oswald as blonde and short. 706/ It had also excised Duran's statement-- "The only aid she could give Oswald was advising that he see the Soviet Consul, and calling the person in charge of that office" which alluded to Oswald asking for some type of aid at the Cuban Consulate. 707/ In addition, Ms. Duran's strong statement "He never called her back" 707a/ was changed to "she does not recall whether or not Oswald later telephoned her at the Consulate number that she have him. 707b/ Had the statements been included, the Warren Commission's conclusions would not have seemed as strong.

The Warren Commission staff was not completely satisfied with Ms. Duran's ten page signed statement obtained by the Mexican authorities. W. David Slawson wrote:

We then discussed...the problem of (interviewing) Silvia Duran. We pointed out that our only interest in witnesses (in Mexico) other than Duran was to get their formal testimony for authentication purposes...This was not true of Duran, however, because she had been interviewed only by the Mexican police

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and we considered that interview inadequate. (I should point out that we do not consider it totally inadequate, however. It is only on details such as Oswald's physical appearance, side comments or remarks he may have made, etc., that we would like to interrogate Mrs. Duran further. On the essential point of whether or not his contacts with the Embassy consisted of anything other than an attempt to travel to Cuba, Silvia Duran's knowledge has probably been exhausted.) 708/

The Warren Commission staff's attempts to interview Ms. Duran never succeeded. 709/ Ms. Duran was not interviewed by Americans until 1976, when two reporters from the Washington Post interviewed her. 710/ On June 6, 1978, representatives of the House Select Committee on Assassinations interviewed Ms. Duran in Mexico City.

VI. Information not available at the time of the Warren Commission investigation

A. Silvia Tirado (nee Duran)

1. House Select Committee on Assassinations 6/6/78

Interview of Silvia Tirado

Ms. Tirado (Silvia divorced Horatio Duran in 1968) was never questioned by American officials in 1963. Thus, the Committee established contact with the Mexican government and requested that the Mexican government make Silvia Tirado available for an interview. 711/ The Mexican

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