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SUBJECTS : DORTICOS, PRES.
GOVT OF MEXICO

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CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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1996

6 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Plans

SUBJECT: Conversation with Warren Commission
Staffer on Mexico Phone Taps

1. On 5 May 1964, Mr. Slawson, member of the Warren Commission Staff, came to our office to talk to me and Mr. Tom Hall of CI/R&A about a Mexico matter. When he was in Mexico City with Mr. Coleman and Mr. Willens of the Staff, they talked to Mr. Scott about the several phone calls between Cuban President Dorticos and Cuban Ambassador to Mexico Hernandez. The gist of these talks is still unclear, and no one is sure just what Dorticos was driving at. Mr. Scott told them that the intercept was very hard to understand because of background noise and added it might be useful to go over the tapes again, using a crack Cuban linguist.

2. We agreed to do this and we have several people collaborating on the tape, which I had retained in my safe.

3. Mr. Slawson requested a new translation of the conversations and an interpretive commentary on them, which we agreed to supply, subject to your approval. Mr. Slawson then brought up the manner in which he and Mr. Rankin will have to present this and other telephone evidence to the members of the Commission. He assured us that the Commission members themselves still do not know of the existence of any phone calls, but they will have to be told. On the Dorticos phone calls, he requested that some CIA phone and language expert be made available to testify on the calls, explaining their true or probable meaning and giving an authoritative opinion about them. We replied that this procedure would be up to Mr. Rocca and Mr. Helms, and we could give no opinion on it.

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4. Mr. Slawson emphasized that his final report, which would be published, would not expressly allude to phone calls nor would it contain information which would demonstrate the existence of taps. He would rely principally on the official statements of Silvia Duran, which lead to the same conclusions ~~of~~ the phone calls and which, he said, the Mexican Government gave them permission to publish. He would attempt to reconstruct Oswald's movements and contacts in Mexico City accurately, but would base them on Silvia Duran's statements and on official reports from the hotel clerk and others, and on the statements of Marina Oswald quoting her husband about his activities while in Mexico City. He was still at a loss about how he would bring in the Dorticos phone calls, and we could not give him much help. We emphasized the continuing sensitivity and importance of our phone taps and other coverage as means of detecting future defectors and traitors. Mr. Slawson gave every evidence of being aware of the problem.

[JOHN SCALSO]

C/WH/3

cc: C/CI

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