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*** BEGIN MESSAGE 55 ***

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ACTION EUR-01

INFO LOG-00 CIAE-00 C-01 ANHR-01 CISA-02 DS-00 FBIE-00

INRE-00 INR-01 JUSE-00 L-03 ADS-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

PM-02 P-01 SP-00 SSO-00 SS-00 ASDS-01 /013W

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O 041421Z NOV 92

FM AMEMBASSY MINSK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0885

BT

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SERIAL: MINSK 01220-92

DEPT FOR EUR/ISCA

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PINR, BO, US

SUBJECT: THE OSWALD FILES

REF: A) STATE 353053, B) MINSK 703

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN A NINETY-MINUTE MEETING NOVEMBER 4 AT THE KGB HEADQUARTERS IN MINSK (OTHER ISSUES REPORTED SEPTEL), AMBASSADOR MADE REF A DEMARCHE, REQUESTING ACCESS TO THE KGB'S FILES ON LEE HARVEY OSWALD. BELARUSIAN KGB CHIEF EDUARD SHIRKOVSKIY, WHILE EXPRESSING A WILLINGNESS "TO MAKE THINGS MORE TRANSPARENT" TO THE

U.S., SAID HE COULD NOT SIMPLY HAND OVER THE DOCUMENTS INASMUCH AS KGB METHODS OF OPERATION WOULD ALSO BE REVEALED. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD OPEN HIMSELF UP TO ALL SORTS OF ACCUSATIONS IF HE ACTED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF PARLIAMENT.

3. SHIRKOVSKIY SUGGESTED AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, ADDING THAT BELARUS HAD MANY LINGERING QUESTIONS ABOUT WHO SENT OSWALD TO THE FORMER USSR AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE. HE EXPRESSED THE PERSONAL VIEW THAT OSWALD HAD NOT ACTED ALONE; OSWALD, HE SAID, WAS INCAPABLE OF SHOOTING PRESIDENT KENNEDY WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS FROM SOMEBODY. SHIRKOVSKIY PROPOSED THAT THE FBI SUBMIT A LIST OF POINTED QUESTIONS WHICH THE KGB WOULD SEEK TO ANSWER. UPON RECEIPT AND INITIAL RESEARCH OF THE QUESTIONS, SHIRKOVSKIY SUGGESTED U.S. EXPERTS MIGHT VISIT MINSK TO PARTICIPATE IN A WORKING GROUP. SHIRKOVSKIY UNDERScoreD THAT SUCH A

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VISIT SHOULD BE HANDLED QUIETLY. END
SUMMARY.

4. AMBASSADOR SWARTZ AND POL/ECON CHIEF MET
NOVEMBER 4 FOR NINETY MINUTES WITH KGB CHIEF
EDUARD SHIRKOVSKIY AT THE KGB HEADQUARTERS IN
MINSK. (OTHER TOPICS REPORTED SEPTEL.)
SHIRKOVSKIY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY A NOTETAKER
AND "OSWALD EXPERT" GENKADIY SEMYONOVICH

NARKEVICH. REFERRING TO SHIRKOVSKIY'S AUGUST
4 PRESS CONFERENCE (REF B), IN WHICH
SHIRKOVSKIY HAD MENTIONED THE EXISTENCE OF
SIX VOLUMES OF DOCUMENTS RELATING TO LEE
HARVEY OSWALD, AMBASSADOR WENT OVER THE
POINTS IN REF A, REQUESTING FBI ACCESS TO
THOSE DOCUMENTS.

ACCESS IS NOT SO SIMPLE

5. SHIRKOVSKIY REPLIED THAT THE DOCUMENTS
HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN IN THE ARCHIVES IN MOSCOW
AND THAT RUSSIAN KGB CHIEF BAGATIN HAD
OFFERED TO GIVE U.S. OFFICIALS ACCESS TO
THEM. SINCE MANY OF THE EVENTS HAD TAKEN
PLACE IN MINSK, HOWEVER, IT WAS DETERMINED
THAT THE BELARUSIAN KGB SHOULD REVIEW THE
DOCUMENTS.

6. SHIRKOVSKIY SAID HE HAD RECEIVED MANY
REQUESTS FOR ACCESS TO THE FILES -- FROM THE
LIKES OF MOVIE PRODUCERS AND THE WRITER
NORMAN MAILER. ON A PREVIOUS VISIT TO MINSK,
MAILER HAD BEEN INTRODUCED TO CERTAIN PEOPLE,
NOW RETIRED, WHO KNEW OSWALD. MOREOVER,
MAILER HAD BEEN GIVEN ACCESS TO A NUMBER OF
"BASIC DOCUMENTS," THE AUTHENTICITY OF WHICH
THE KGB WAS WILLING TO PERMIT TO HAVE
VERIFIED BY WESTERN EXPERTS.

7. THE PROBLEM, SAID SHIRKOVSKIY, WAS THAT
THE DOCUMENTS AS A WHOLE--WHICH SHIRKOVSKIY
CLAIMED WERE KEPT IN A SPECIAL SAFE, TO WHICH
NO ONE HAD ACCESS--REVEALED KGB METHODOLOGIES
AND REFERRED TO PEOPLE, MANY OF WHOM WERE
STILL ALIVE. SHIRKOVSKIY COULD NOT SIMPLY
HAND OVER THE FILES TO THE FBI OR CIA (HE
ADDED THE LATTER ACRONYM). IF HE DID SO, HE
WOULD BE SKEWERED BY PARLIAMENT AND ACCUSED
OF BEING A TRAITOR AND WORSE. HE NOTED THAT
THE U.S. ITSELF HAD STILL NOT DECLASSIFIED
PORTIONS OF THE WARREN COMMISSION'S REPORT
AND DOCUMENTATION.

BUT WE WANT TO COOPERATE

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8. SHIRKOVSKIY NEVERTHELESS SAID THE KGB WOULD BE WILLING "TO MAKE THINGS MORE
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SUBJECT: THE OSWALD FILES

TRANSPARENT" TO THE U.S. HE SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS AN EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WAS POSSIBLE, WITH THE KGB AND CIA HANDING OVER ITS INFORMATION AND THE KGB GIVING THEM INFORMATION FROM ITS FILES. SHIRKOVSKIY SAID THE KGB HAD MANY LINGERING QUESTIONS ABOUT OSWALD, WHO SENT HIM AND WHY -- THE CIA, THE MAFIA, WHO?

9. THE AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT THE U.S. WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND IF THE KGB HELD US AT ARMS LENGTH WHILE PERMITTING

NORMAN MAILER ACCESS TO THE FILES. SHERKOVSKIY REITERATED THAT MAILER HAD BEEN GIVEN ACCESS TO "BASIC DOCUMENTS" ONLY AND SAID THEY HAD BEEN PROVIDED IN THE HOPE THAT AN OBJECTIVE OBSERVER AND WRITER COULD MAKE THE U.S. PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT UNDERSTAND THAT THE ENIGMA OF OSWALD AND THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY LAY IN THE U.S.

OSWALD

10. SHIRKOVSKIY SAID THE KGB HAD ORIGINALLY THOUGHT OSWALD WAS A CIA PLANT, BUT HAD

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REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME, THE KGB REALIZED OSWALD WAS OF NO USE TO IT AND THANKED ITS LUCKY STARS WHEN HE FINALLY LEFT THE USSR. SHIRKOVSKIY EXPRESSED THE PERSONAL VIEW THAT OSWALD COULD NOT HAVE ACTED ALONE WHEN HE SHOT PRESIDENT KENNEDY; HE WAS SIMPLY INCAPABLE OF THIS, BEING UNSTABLE IN THE EXTREME. HE REFERRED TO OSWALD'S ATTEMPT TO SLASH HIS WRISTS AS EVIDENCE OF THIS INSTABILITY.

NEXT STEPS

11. IN RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S PRODDING

ON HOW NEXT TO PROCEED, SHIRKOVSKIY SUGGESTED THAT THE FBI PUT TOGETHER A LIST OF DETAILED, FOCUSSED QUESTIONS, WHICH KGB EXPERTS ON OSWALD WOULD SEEK TO RESEARCH AND ANSWER. THEN PERHAPS, U.S. EXPERTS COULD QUIETLY COME TO MINSK TO MEET WITH KGB EXPERTS. SHIRKOVSKIY UNDERSCORED THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO GET IN THE MIDDLE OF POLITICS OR POSTURING. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS TO GET AT THE TRUTH. HE STRESSED THAT THE BELARUSIANS WOULD HAVE A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS FOR U.S. EXPERTS AS WELL.

12. SHIRKOVSKIY SAID THAT WHEN AND IF THE EMBASSY RECEIVED A LIST OF FOCUSSED QUESTIONS THEY SHOULD BE PASSED TO HIM OR TO GENNADIY NARKEVICH, WHOM HE INTRODUCED AS THE PREEMINENT EXPERT ON OSWALD IN BELARUS. NARKEVICH PROMISED TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE EMBASSY TO PROVIDE A NUMBER AT WHICH HE COULD BE REACHED.

SWARTZ

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