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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

20 DEC 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Deputy Secretary of State

SUBJECT : Bulgarian Complicity in the Papal Assassination Attempt (S)

1. Attached is a memorandum requested by Ken Dam reviewing all information available to the Agency on Bulgarian involvement in the attempt to assassinate the Pope. As you will see in the memorandum,

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

2. While the memorandum is very careful in its review of the reporting,

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

7s/ William J. Casey  
William J. Casey  
Director of Central Intelligence

Attachment:  
As Stated

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EYES ONLY~~

C1 By Signer  
DECL OADR

MEMORANDUM

Bulgarian Complicity in the Papal Assassination Attempt

1. Introduction: We are unable at this juncture to develop a clear-cut, conclusive picture of Bulgarian involvement with would-be papal assassin Mehmet Ali Agca.

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

2.

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

3.

[Redacted] the Italian magistrate system, which gives investigators and prosecutors independence and wide latitude and prohibits public disclosure until trial. This system also protects magistrates from public scrutiny and has in the past led to selective press leaks for political purposes, particularly in cases that capture public attention. [Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

4.

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

This entire memorandum is classified ~~SECRET~~

[Redacted] (b)(3)  
(b)(3)

~~SECRET~~

(b)(3)

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

5.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

6.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

(b)(1)  
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7.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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8.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

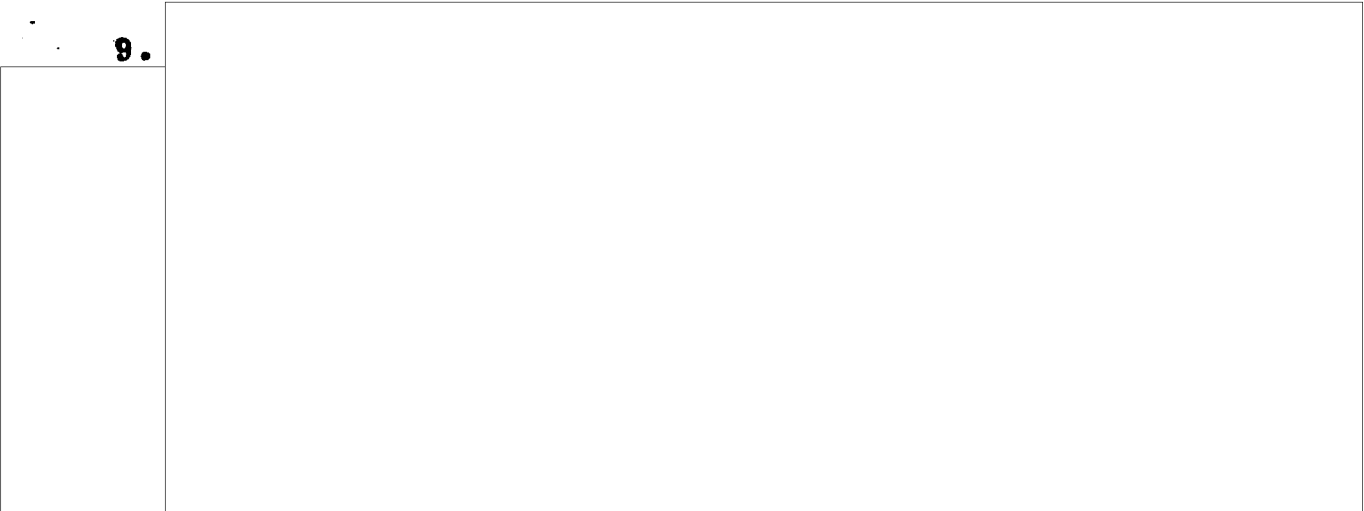
(b)(1)  
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(b)(1)  
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9.



(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

10. [redacted] Agca maintained that he had no confederates in his attempt against the Pope.

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

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~~SECRET~~

(b)(3)

Subsequently, arrest warrants have been issued [redacted] (b)(1)  
[redacted] for three Bulgarian nationals and four (b)(3)  
Turkish nationals on grounds that they assisted in Agca's  
attempted assassination. The Bulgarians are:

-- Sergey Ivanov Antonov, a Bulgarian airlines  
representative in Rome, arrested on 25 November and now  
in Italian custody. [redacted] (b)(1)  
[redacted] (b)(3)

-- Zhelyo Kolev Vasilev, a former secretary to the  
Bulgarian military attache in Rome who returned to  
Bulgaria in July, 1982.

-- Todor Stoyanov Ayvazov, the chief Bulgarian embassy  
accountant, who returned to Bulgaria in November, 1982.

11. [redacted] (b)(1)  
[redacted] (b)(3)

12. [redacted] (b)(1)  
[redacted] (b)(3)

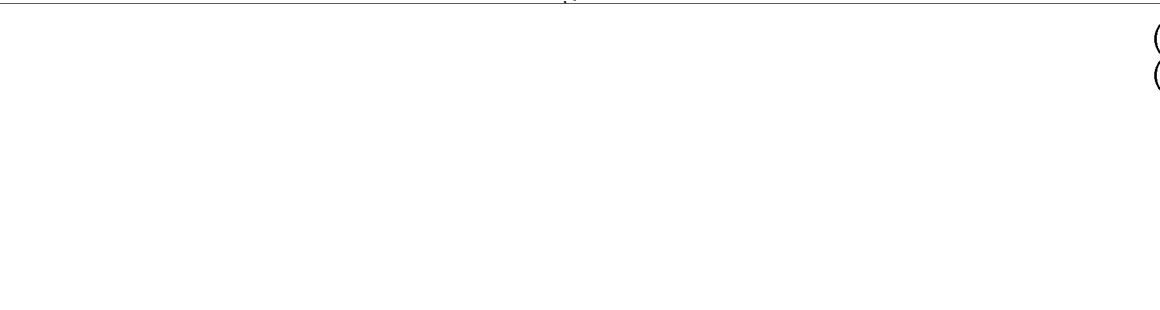
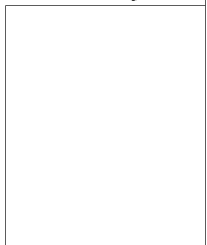
13. [redacted] (b)(1)  
[redacted] (b)(3)

According to the US Embassy in  
Rome, the alleged Bulgarian connection, currently a cause celebre  
in Italy, has prompted political maneuvering within the newly  
formed four party coalition. The Socialists, Social Democrats,  
and Liberals charge that the Christian Democrats, who control the  
Foreign and Interior ministries, have been reluctant to pursue

the Bulgarian angle. While sensitive to the criticism leveled by their coalition partners, the Christian Democrats insist that the government must proceed cautiously until Martella's evidence has been completely aired. Foreign Minister Colombo told Secretary Shultz on 13 December that his government was not certain whether Agca's statements [redacted] were true, or were designed to secure for Agca a reduced sentence. (b)(1) (b)(3)

14.

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)



15. The assassination attempt has been described, from the point of view of the tradecraft demonstrated, as shoddy and therefore, antithetical to the sound practices expected of a professional intelligence organization. The US Embassy in Sofia offers the view that it is difficult to believe that the Bulgarian security services were directly involved in Agca's assassination plot "because it would have been so stupid." Neither of these two considerations, however, necessarily exclude the possibility of official Bulgarian involvement.

16.

(b)(1)  
(b)(3)

