

1 - Mr. Belmont 1 - Mr. Rosen
 1 - Mr. Mohr 1 - Mr. Sullivan
 1 - Mr. DeLoach 1 - Mr. Branigan

October 23, 1964

BY COURIER SERVICE

Honorable J. Lee Rankin
 General Counsel
 The President's Commission
 200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast
 Washington, D. C.

1 - Mr. Malley
 1 - R.E. Lenihan

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Reference is made to your letter dated September 30, 1964, requesting our authorization to declassify a number of documents which were furnished to the Commission by this Bureau during the course of our investigation regarding the assassination of the late President John F. Kennedy.

In accordance with your request, we have reviewed the documents in question and have declassified a number of these documents where their continuance in a classified status is not required by the interests of the national defense. In addition, we have revised certain pages in a number of these documents in order to place them in an unclassified status and at the same time meet the requirements of the Commission.

However, I again wish to call your attention to the fact that many of our reports in the Robert Kennedy case, the Lee Harvey Oswald case, and related cases contain considerable information of a highly personal nature which was furnished to our Agents during the investigation of these cases. I particularly desire to point out those reports and memoranda dealing with Michael and Ruth Paine and George and Joanne de Mohrenschildt and the personal lives of these people. Making the contents of such documents available to the public could cause serious repercussions to the Commission.

You will recall that I previously expressed my concern regarding this matter in my letter to you dated January 13, 1964. Such letter dealt with our reports concerning Jack Ruby which contain information which may be

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Honorable J. Lee Rankin

in the nature of gossip and rumor and which has not been substantiated. Such information did represent the views of the persons interviewed and was reported as it was received by us. I brought such matter to your attention in view of the fact that if this type of information should be misused or become a matter of public knowledge, it would reflect most unfavorably upon the Department of Justice and the President's Commission. I also informed you that I was alerting Assistant Attorney General Herbert J. Miller, Jr., of the Department of Justice regarding these observations.

I also want to point out that on May 4, 1964, Mr. A. H. Belmont of this Bureau discussed the matter of making public our investigative reports with Mr. Edward Willens and Mr. Samuel Stern of your staff. Mr. Belmont pointed out to Mr. Stern at that time that at a previous meeting Mr. Stern had raised questions on certain items in our reports which might reflect on innocent persons if the reports are made public in their entirety. Both Mr. Stern and Mr. Willens at that time concluded that if the Commission publicized such reports in their entirety, the Commission will be criticized for making public information concerning innocent persons.

In view of the great number of documents which the Commission has requested authority to declassify at this time, I again want to specifically call this matter to your attention and point out the responsibility which must be assumed by the Commission in the event these documents are made available to the public.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover

NOTE:

See cover memorandum W. A. Branigan to W. C. Sullivan dated October 22, 1964, regarding "Lee Harvey Oswald, IS - R - CUBA," prepared by REL:hrt...