

Commission Raps FBI, Secret Service

By MIKE QUINN

Washington Bureau of The News
WASHINGTON — The Warren Commission sharply criticized the Secret Service for its advance preparations for the Dallas visit by President Kennedy and also had some blunt advice for the FBI.

The commission termed the advance preparations for the President's Nov. 22 trip to Dallas as "deficient" and laid the blame in the main at the feet of the elite presidential body-guard group's past policy.

However, the commission also criticized the FBI for its "unduly restrictive view" of its responsibilities in preventive intelligence work, prior to that assassination.

Pointing out that the FBI knew of Lee Harvey Oswald, the commission said: "There were no Secret Service criteria which specifically required the referral of Oswald's case to the Secret Service; nor was there any requirement to report the names of defectors.

"However, there was much material in the hands of the FBI about Oswald: The knowledge of his defection, his arrogance and hostility to the United States, his pro-Castro tendencies, his lies when interrogated by the FBI, his trip to Mexico where he was in contact with Soviet authorities, his presence in the school book depository job and its location along the route of the motorcade.

"All this does seem to amount to enough to have induced an alert agency, such as the FBI, possessed of this information to list Oswald as a potential threat to the safety of the President."

The commission concluded that even in the absence of Secret Service "criteria" for referral, "a more alert and carefully considered treatment of the Oswald case by the bureau might have brought about such a referral."

The criticism of the Secret Service's actions went further and into more detail, producing recommendations for straightening things out.

The commission said that it recognized the problems involved in protecting a president, then said:

"Nevertheless, the commission believes that recommendations for improvements in presidential protection are compelled by the facts disclosed in this investigation . . .

"The commission has concluded that the criteria and procedures of the Secret Service designed to identify and protect against persons considered threats to the President, were not adequate prior to the assassination."

The commission then made these points:

"The protective research section of the Secret Service . . . lacked sufficient trained personnel and the mechanical and technical assistance needed to fulfill its responsibility . . .

". . . (Secret Service) failed to recognize the necessity of identifying other potential sources of danger to his security. The Secret Service did not develop adequate and specific criteria defining those persons or groups who might present a danger to the President."

The commission also pointed out that there was "insufficient liaison and coordination" of information between the Secret Service and other federal agencies such as the referral situation mentioned earlier.

The report thought the detailed preparation for protecting President Kennedy at Love Field and the Trade Mart were "thorough and well executed" but found these faults with the advance preparations.

First, there were no well-defined instructions to local police authorities as to their respective responsibilities.

Second, "the Secret Service as a matter of practice did not investigate, or caused to be checked, any building located along the motorcade route to be taken by the President," the commission said."

Included in this, the commission added, was surveying building windows.

"Based on its investigation, the commission has concluded that these arrangements during the trip to Dallas were clearly not sufficient."

In addition, the commission felt the seating of agents in cars did not allow them the opportunity to assist the President if he was in danger although in Dallas the agents "reacted promptly" when the first shot was fired.

The commission then noted before going into its recommendations that the Secret Service has already completed a "comprehensive and critical review of its total operations."

It did make these recommendations, however:

1. Set up a committee of cabinet members including the secretary of treasury (of which the Secret Service is a branch) and the attorney general to oversee the protective activities of the service and other agencies in safeguarding the President.

2. Study the suggestions for possibly transferring presidential protection from the Secret Service to some other agency. However, the commission said this would be up to the executive and congressional branches.

3. Secretary of treasury appoint a special assistant to oversee daily workings of service. ("One of the initial assignments," the report said, "of this special assistant would be the supervision of the current effort by the Secret Service to revise and modernize its basic operating procedures.")

4. A complete overhaul of facilities devoted to advance detection of potential threats to the President. This would include, the commission said, the "most efficient data-processing techniques."

5. Increase precautionary measures of buildings along parade routes where the President travels.

The commission added that other agencies, specifically the FBI, must have closer liaison with the service and pointed out that once its recommendations are carried out the service will need additional trained personnel to do the job.

While these were the specifics of criticisms and recommendations here are some of the points in testimony which led the commission to its conclusions.

For example, the commission pointed out that FBI agent James P. Hosty was one of two agents to accumulate information on Os-

ward in the Dallas office. Hosty told the commission that he did not realize the motorcade was going to pass by the book depository where Oswald worked.

"Even if he had recalled that Oswald's place of employment was on the President's route," Hosty testified that he "would not have cited him to the Secret Service as a potential threat to the President," the report said.

This is where the commission is critical of what it termed "unduly restrictive view" by the FBI in passing information on to the Secret Service.

It was also Hosty who talked with Dallas Police Lt. Jack Reville. Reville said in a memo that Hosty said the FBI knew Oswald was "capable of committing this assassination."

Hosty has denied he said it in talking to the Warren Commission.

The commission then moves into the specific area of Secret Service agent instructions and pointed out that agent Winston G. Lawson, agent in charge of advance preparation, was not given any instructions in writing.

"The commission believes, however, that the Secret Service has inadequately defined the responsibilities of its advance agents, who have been given broad discretion to determine what matters require attention in making advance preparation and to decide what action to take.

"Agent Lawson was not given written instructions concerning the Dallas trip or advice about any peculiar problems which it might involve; all instructions from higher authority were communicated to him orally. He did not have a checklist of the tasks he was expected to accomplish, either by his own efforts or with the cooperation of local authorities."

The commission then states that because of the complexities and diversity of dangers procedures applied for years may not now be sufficient to guard the President. In addition a checklist should have been made out for the Texas trip, the commission felt.

The commission also pointed out that the service's standing policy of not checking buildings is "not persuasive." Pointing out that President Kennedy himself mentioned how a president could easily be killed by a sniper, the commission said:

"An attempt to cover only the most obvious points of possible ambush along the route in Dallas might well have included the Texas School Book Depository building."

Over all, looking at both the Secret Service and FBI, the commission added: "The commission believes that both the FBI and the Secret Service have too narrowly construed their respective responsibilities. The commission has the impression that too much emphasis is placed by both on the investigation of specific threats by individuals and not enough on dangers from other sources."

In conclusion, the commission said: "This commission can recommend no procedures for the future protection of our presidents which will guarantee security. The demands on the president in the execution of his responsibilities in today's world are so varied and complex and the traditions of the office in a democracy such as ours are so deepseated as to preclude absolute security.

"The commission has, however, from its examination of the facts of President Kennedy's assassination made certain recommendations which it believes would, if adopted, materially improve upon the procedures in effect at the time of President Kennedy's assassination and result in a substantial lessening of the danger."