

'Cuban Connection' a Concern As Schweiker Studies JFK Case

By Norman Kempster
Washington Star Staff Writer

After conducting secret interviews with more than 20 witnesses during the last two months, Sen. Richard Schweiker is convinced the Warren Commission did not adequately investigate the "Cuban connection" which may hold the key to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

"There is an awful lot that we know now that the Warren Commission did not know that would have changed the whole thrust of what they were trying to do," Schweiker, R-Pa., said in an interview in his Capitol Hill office.

"The key to the whole thing is to ascertain which side of the Cuban fence Lee Harvey Oswald was working and why," Schweiker added.

The Warren Commission, headed by former Chief Justice Earl Warren, concluded that Oswald, acting alone, assassinated Kennedy in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

THE COMMISSION considered Oswald's connection with the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee, but concluded that it did not play a role in the killing.

However, Schweiker said the commission failed to investigate leads that indicated Oswald also had links to Cuban groups opposed to Premier Fidel Castro's government.

"He may have been playing with both sides," Schweiker said.

Schweiker and Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., are serving as a two-member subcommittee of the Senate Intelligence Committee to investigate the role played by the CIA and the FBI in the Warren Commission investigation.

"We have turned up some very interesting discrepancies," Schweiker said. He declined to go into detail, however, because the rules of the full committee forbid disclosure of the results of closed-door interrogations.

"We still don't have any one single thing that I could go to the Senate with to get a reopening of the Warren Commission investigation," Schweiker conceded. But he said that if the subcommittee is permitted to continue its probe for two months beyond the full committee's scheduled March 1 termination date, "we will have at least a reasonable top-of-the-desk look at the thing which I will be satisfied with."

SCHWEIKER said that after reading documents and interviewing witnesses he has become convinced that the CIA and the FBI did not "level" with the commission on all issues.

"Keeping Jim Hosty's name and telephone number out of the report—that was symbolic," Schweiker said.

Hosty is an FBI agent who was assigned to the Dallas office at the time of the assassination. His name, telephone number and auto license number were in Oswald's notebook, but were omitted from a report on the

contents of the book which the FBI initially submitted to the Warren Commission.

The FBI later amended the submission to add Hosty's name. At the time, the bureau explained the agent's name was omitted because it did not provide an "investigative lead," Schweiker and other critics of the Warren Commission have been dissatisfied with that explanation.

Schweiker said the CIA may have thrown the Warren Commission off the Cuban scent by failing to inform it of plots to kill Castro, including one long-running conspiracy that involved the Mafia.

SCHWEIKER said if the Warren Commission had known the full extent of possible Cuban involvement

with Oswald it might have conducted a more thorough investigation of those matters.

He noted that a 111-page memo to the commission drafted by staff members William T. Coleman Jr.—now secretary of transportation—and W. David Slawson outlined possible connections between Oswald and both pro- and anti-Castro Cubans.

"The Coleman-Slawson memo was the best piece of work that the Warren Commission did," Schweiker said.

But he noted that the memo was not filed until near the end of the commission's work and that it apparently was given little credence.

"Either Warren or (former President Lyndon B.) Johnson called for a quick wrap-up of the investigation and they did not have time to consider fully the Coleman-Slawson memo," Schweiker said.

Schweiker said the present investigation is hampered by memories which have faded with the passage of time.

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But he said he still hopes it will be possible to determine precisely Oswald's relationships with Cuban groups.

"If you can ascertain which side he was really on or if he was playing both sides then I think you can logically determine who may have worked with him, what he did and why he did it," Schweiker said.

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