

120

HOOPER HITS #1/26/66

Hoover Hits Critics of Warren Report as 'Ignoring Facts'

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WASHINGTON—"Not one shred of evidence" exists to indicate that Lee Harvey Oswald had an accomplice in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, J. Edgar Hoover said Friday.

The director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation thus upheld the main conclusion of the Warren Commission Report, that Oswald had acted alone.

Rapping critics of the report, Hoover said that while they have a right to express their views "they should show more regard for the facts on record."

"They have ignored certain facts," he said, "misinterpreted others, and expressed pure speculation as truth."

The Hoover statement serves to undermine to some extent the case of certain writers against the Warren Commission's findings, including Edward J. Epstein. His book, "Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth," triggered the new outburst of criticism of the commission when it was published early last summer.

Furthermore, the Hoover statement followed by only two days the statement by Texas Gov. John B. Connally Jr. that the commission's findings should be accepted as final unless compelling new evidence appears.

Connally Was Passenger

Connally, a passenger in the Presidential car in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963, has always maintained that he and Mr. Kennedy were struck by separate bullets, whereas the Warren Commission held that one of the bullets that wounded the President also passed through Connally.

This discrepancy has given rise among some critics to the theory that a second assassin was involved and to the demand that a new investigation be conducted.

At his press conference in Austin Wednesday, Connally said he does not disagree with the commission's findings except on "this one detail" about the shots. He rapped the critics, particularly Mark Lane, author of "Rush to Judgment" and insisted

... evidence, another investigation is "neither warranted, justified or desirable."

Certain critics, notably Epstein, have seized an apparent discrepancy in FBI reports on the autopsy. They have used these reports to argue that Mr. Kennedy and Connally were hit by separate bullets and that there was, therefore, a strong likelihood of a second gunman. Epstein made much of the fact that in its first assassination report, dated Dec. 9, 1963, the FBI listed the first bullet that entered the President's body did not exit. This is the bullet the Warren Commission believed struck Connally. A supplementary FBI report, dated Jan. 13, 1964, said this bullet entered Kennedy's back and "penetrated to a distance of less than a finger."

The FBI reports "precluded the possibility that both men were hit by the same bullet," Epstein maintained, adding, "there is a prima facie case that two assassins were

... statement... sharply disagreed. Without mentioning Epstein or any other critic, he said that, while there is a difference in information reported by the FBI and information contained in the official autopsy report, "there is no conflict." He explained:

"The FBI reports record oral statements made by autopsy physicians while the examination was being conducted and before all the facts were known. The autopsy report records the final findings of the examination."

The autopsy report said the bullet did exit from the front of the President's neck. Thus it could have passed through Connally, who was seated in a

of the President. Hoover related that two FBI agents were present when the autopsy was conducted at Bethesda (Md.) Naval Hospital on the night of the assassination.

"They reported," he said, "that Dr. James J. Humes, chief autopsy surgeon, located what appeared to be a bullet hole in the back below the shoulder and probed it to the end of the opening with a finger. The examining physicians were unable to explain why they could find no bullet or point of exit."

"Unknown to agents the physicians eventually were able to trace the path of the bullet through the body."

"The clothing worn by the President when he was shot was examined by the FBI laboratory," Hoover recalled. "This examination revealed a small hole in the back of his coat and shirt and a slit characteristic of an exit hole for a projectile in front of the shirt one inch below the collar button."

"A nick on the left side of the tie knot, possibly caused by the same projectile which passed through the shirt, also was noted."

Hoover said both the FBI and the Warren Commission received official copies of the autopsy report from the Secret Service Dec. 23, 1963. Because this report was in the commission's hands, the FBI report Jan. 13 did not repeat the autopsy findings.

Hoover described as "totally false" reports that the FBI altered the motion picture color film of the assassination. **END**