

On instructions of President Johnson the Department of Justice today transmitted directly to the Presidential Commission the Federal Bureau of Investigation's first report on the assassination of President Kennedy.

The FBI's investigation is continuing and further reports will be made to the Commission. President Johnson has directed the Department of Justice to press the investigation until all avenues of exploration into every facet of the assassination and subsequent related events have been exhausted.

The President's Commission has requested that the report not be made public until the Commission has reviewed it and taken whatever action may be necessary to accomplish its mission.

However, in the public interest, the President, with the concurrence of the Commission, has authorized the Department of Justice to make the following points:

(1) While the Commission will make the final determination, in the opinion of the Department of Justice, the FBI report through scientific examination of evidence and through testimony, establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that Lee Harvey Oswald shot President Kennedy on November 22, 1963. The evidence includes ballistic tests, fingerprints and palm prints, clothing fibers and other technical data which places Oswald at the scene of the crime and establishes that

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He fired the shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally of Texas.

(2) The FBI has made an exhaustive investigation into whether Oswald may have conspired with or been assisted by any person, foreign or domestic, in carrying out this dastardly act. In this regard, the FBI has questioned hundreds of persons and checked out numerous rumors and reports. No stone will be left unturned in probing every possible lead, but to date this aspect of the investigation has been negative. No evidence has been uncovered indicating that any person, including Dallas night club owner, Jack Ruby, was involved with Oswald in the assassination of President Kennedy.

The report transmitted to the Commission contained two volumes of _____ pages, summarizing the FBI's investigation up to December _____, and three volumes containing _____ exhibits.

After the release of Oswald's letters to Castro's 10

ing the public that Oswald was the assassin and that he acted alone. (25) In addition to the memorandum referred to earlier, on December 9, 1963, Katzenbach wrote each member of the Warren Commission recommending that the Commission immediately issue a press release stating that the FBI report, which had been submitted to the Warren Commission that same day, clearly showed there was no international conspiracy and that Oswald was a loner. (27)

(25) The Commission did not issue the requested press release. Although in their testimony several of the Warren Commission staff members indicated they were not aware of these memoranda, (27) it is apparent that this purpose was clearly in the minds of some of the people who were in contact with the Warren Commission and the members of the Warren Commission could not have been unaware of the pressure.

(26) Another purpose of the Warren Commission, which was at least apparent to Chief Justice Warren and to President Johnson, was the quashing of rumors and speculation. President Johnson was concerned that the public might believe his home State of Texas was involved in the assassination. He was also aware of speculation about Castro's possible participation. President Johnson expressed his concern in "The Advantage Point":

Now, with Oswald dead, even a wounded Governor could not quell the doubts. In addition, we were aware of stories that Castro, still smarting over the Bay of Pigs and only lately accusing us of sending CIA agents into the country to assassinate him, was the perpetrator of the Oswald assassination plot. These rumors were another compelling reason that a thorough study had to be made of the Dallas tragedy at once. *Out of the Nation's suspicions, out of the Nation's need for facts, the Warren Commission was born.* [Italics added] (26)

(27) On January 29, 1964, at the first staff meeting of the Warren Commission, Chief Justice Warren discussed the role of the Commission. A memorandum about this meeting described Warren's statements:

He (Warren) placed emphasis on the importance of quenching rumors, and precluding further speculation such as that which has surrounded the death of Lincoln. He emphasized that the Commission had to determine the truth, whatever that might be. (28)

(28) At this meeting, Warren also informed the staff of the Commission he had had with President Johnson, including the fact that the rumors could lead to a nuclear war which would cost 40 million lives. (28) Both the Chief Justice and President Johnson were obviously concerned about the rumors and speculation, so concerned that they were afraid of a nuclear war if the rumors were not quashed.

(29) World reaction to the assassination, and its coverage in the media, may have reinforced this concern. An editorial on November 23, 1963, in the New York Times stated that President Johnson "must convince the country that this bitter tragedy will not divert us from

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our proclaimed purposes or check our forward movement." On November 24, 1963, the New York Times reported that Pravda was changing right-wingers in the United States of trying to use the assassination of President Kennedy to stir up anti-Soviet and anti-Cuban hysteria. The same article stated:

The Moscow radio said Oswald was charged with Mr. Kennedy's slaying after 10 hours of interrogation, but there was no evidence which could prove this accusation.

(30) On November 25, 1963, Donald Wilson, acting director of the United States Information Agency, submitted a memorandum to Bill Moyers that discussed world reaction to Oswald's slaying. This memorandum went through each major city and summarized newspaper articles that had appeared regarding Oswald's death. A Tass dispatch released after Oswald was killed concluded:

All the circumstances of President Kennedy's tragic death allow one to assume that this murder was planned and carried out by the ultrarightwing, fascist, and racist circles, by those who cannot stomach any step aimed at the easing of international tensions, and the improvement of Soviet-American relations. (30)

(31) On the same day, the New York Times stated in an editorial:

The full story of the assassination and its stunning sequel must be placed before the American people and the world in a responsible way by a responsible source of the U.S. Government * * * The killing of the accused assassin does not close the books on the case. In fact, it raises questions which must be answered if we are ever to fathom the depths of the President's terrible death and its aftermath. An objective Federal commission, if necessary, with Members of Congress included, must be appraised of all and tell us all. Much as we would like to obliterate from memory the most dreadful weekend in our history, a clear explanation must be forthcoming. Not in a spirit of vengeance, not to cover up, but for the sake of information and justice to restore respect for law. (31)

(32) An editorial in the Washington Post stated:

President Lyndon Johnson has widely recognized that energetic steps must be taken to prevent a repetition of the dreadful era of rumor and gossip that followed the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. A century has hardly sufficed to quiet the doubts that arose in the wake of that tragedy. (32)

(33) On November 27, 1963, the New York Times reported a Tass dispatch that severely criticized the Dallas police. On the same day the Washington Post reported that dozens of questions remain unanswered. On November 29, 1963, the Washington Post reported that Castro had accused American reactionaries of plotting the assassination to implicate Cuba. The Times also reported that the general feeling in India was that Oswald had been a "trick" and should

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PRESS RELEASE DICTATED BY MR. GUTMAN 12/7/63

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Secretary will recommend no release

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