

N.Y. POST (5:4) 1-19-64

Speed Oswald Probe to Avoid '64 Campaign

By MILTON VIORST

New York Post Correspondent

Washington, Jan. 18—The Presidential commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy plans to step up operations in hope of completing its report before the national conventions this summer.

The Warren commission, recognizing that some of its findings may have political repercussions, wants any furor to die out before the campaigns begin. The GOP convention is July 13th.

For practical purposes, the commission has rejected any delay of the report until after Election Day on the grounds that procrastination would generate wild rumors that would be more explosive in the campaign than the report itself could possibly be.

The work of the commission, appointed by President Johnson and under the direction of Chief Justice Warren, has hardly started. Its counsel, J. Lee Rankin, former Solicitor General, has barely had time to assemble his staff. Interrogations are scheduled to begin next month.

Rankin intends to keep his staff at about a dozen top lawyers.

Separate Probe Out

He has decided not to conduct a separate and independent investigation of the assassination but to rely on the reports submitted by the agencies involved, checking their word against that of witnesses and other agencies.

To date, the commission has not been hampered by any lack of funds, which came from a special Presidential account. The issue may arise, however, if big expenditures are needed for travel or some other phase of the study.

Rankin is known to oppose setting up a new bureaucracy to conduct the investigation. An experienced hand in dealing

with government agencies, he is known to be confident of his ability to detect any attempt to cover up failures or dereliction of duty.

The commission has already implied that it has doubts about a report prepared by the FBI by refusing to release the report to the public. Some commission members were reportedly irritated when the FBI itself "leaked" some of the data to the press.

It is considered certain, however, that the commission's report will not dwell on criticism of any agency—whether the FBI, the Secret Service or the Dallas police. Such criticism would al-

most certainly set off a round of recriminations.

The commission also recognizes that it must assure the agencies involved of decent treatment in order to get decent cooperation. Rankin, as well as the commission members, recognizes that government agencies can be obstructionist, no matter what their orders, if their self-interest is at stake.

Debate on Secrecy

Instead, the report will focus on possible improvements in protective measures to prevent a recurrence of a Presidential assassination. It is far too early to tell whether the commission will write its report so that criticism can be read between the lines.

At the moment, there is a serious debate going on within the commission on the degree of secrecy the investigation should take. Chief Justice Warren appears to favor giving the public frequent glimpses of commission progress. Some of the other members, however, oppose any disclosure before the final report.

Certain other procedural questions also remain unanswered, such as whether there might be minority reports. Minority views would be certain to have political implications.

It is also unclear whether the commission will release its report directly to the public, after giving a copy to the President, or whether it will be released only at the President's discretion.

Although it is believed that public pressure would give the President little latitude, he might use his power to send the report back for re-working if he is dissatisfied with it in any way.

The members of the commission are, in addition to the Chief Justice, Sen. Russell (D-Ga.), Sen. Cooper (R-Ky.), Rep. Boggs (D-La.), Rep. Ford (R-Mich.), Allen W. Dulles, former director of the CIA, and John J. McCloy, former disarmament adviser.