

NOTES ON ROBERT EDWARD WEBSTER

The case of Robert Webster is of potential interest for at least two reasons. Certain similarities between the Oswald and Webster cases may give some insight on the handling of Oswald by the Soviet and U.S. governments. Also, it is amusing to figure out some of the material deleted in State Dept. communications published by the Warren Commission. It is conceivable that Webster is an interesting figure in his own right, but I don't think so.

On February 7, 1964, Hoover sent the Commission FBI summaries on two U.S. citizens who, like Oswald, had gone to Russia and returned to the U.S. - Webster and Libero Ricciardelli. The 3 page memo on Webster indicates that he lived in Russia from August 1959 to May 1962, obtaining Soviet citizenship. Apparently both his defection and return were for personal reasons. He was interviewed by the FBI after his return, and apparently was asked about (and denied) Soviet intelligence interest in him. (CD 370)

Webster was reportedly questioned in executive session by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee after his return (NYT 5/25/62, p.5). As of Jan. 23, 1967, no such testimony had been released by SISS. (Personal Communication.)

There are several references to Webster by name in the 26 volumes. A summary of his case appears at 18H352. With deletions indicated by (), it reads in part "(Robert Edward Webster) was an employee of the (Rand Development Corporation) assigned to work as a plastics engineer" Considerable information on the Webster case appeared in the NYT as follows : 10/20/59, p.3; 10/21/59, p.5; 5/26/60, p.11; 3/24/62, p.6; 5/17/62; 5/21/62, p.4; 5/25/62, p.5.

A report by Jeremy Campbell of the London Express Service (S.F. Examiner & Chronicle, 11/6/66, p.6) claims that Webster is on a list of persons potentially dangerous to the President. His picture is included, and he is described as "an expert marksman from Ohio" whose whereabouts at the time were unknown.

As revealed in CE 914, State Department Despatch 224 deals with Webster. This dispatch, dated October 26, 1959, is mentioned in CE 917. The copy of the Naval Message in CE 917 which appears as document IV-55 in CD 1114 has a shorter deletion: it reads in part " LEE HARVEY OSWALD FORMER MARINE AND (Deletion) FORMER NAVY. OSWALD STATED ..." It appears, therefore, that this telegram refers to Webster as well as Oswald, and should be read in part as follows: "ATTENTION INVITED TO AMEMB MOSCOW DISPATCHES ... 224 DTD 26 OCTOBER CONCERNING ... (Webster) FORMER NAVY." Thus, this document does not indicate that Oswald visited the U.S. Embassy on or before October 26, 1959, as has been claimed.

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