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Cloudy, showery

JFK Plot Peddlers Are Ripped by Ford

By DANIEL F. GILMORE

WASHINGTON (UPI) — In a stout defense of the Warren Report he helped to prepare, former President Gerald Ford today denounced conspiracy theorists for deliberately misleading the public about the murder of President John F. Kennedy.

The former president twice the target of assassination attempts, said he backs the conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin, the lone assassin.

Ford, who served on the Warren Commission in 1963 and 1964, suggested before the House Assassinations Committee that some commission critics were motivated by a quest for publicity.

"Critics who have attained the widest publicity have either deliberately or negligently misled the American people by misstating facts or eliminating facts in their discussions," Ford said in response to questions.

To support the finding that Oswald alone killed Kennedy, Ford referred to evidence Oswald was linked to the shooting of both Kennedy and a Dallas police officer on the day of the assassination and that there was considerable proof that the bullets which killed the president came from Oswald's rifle.

"The point I wish to make," said Ford, "is that in too many cases critics of the Warren Commission have either misstated or omitted facts developed by the commission and in the process have led the public to have less than full support for the commission's conclusions."

Asked if the commission had experienced difficulty in reaching a unanimous conclusion, Ford said it was decided the conclusion was:

"One, Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin.

"And two, the commission had found no

evidence of a conspiracy, foreign or domestic."

The former president informed the committee in advance that he was invoking executive privilege and would not answer questions relating to his tenure as president from August 1974 to January 1977.

Security was tight in the hearing room as he began his testimony.

Ford also defended the Warren Commission's investigative strategy.

"In my judgment," Ford said, "the Warren Commission made a proper decision that it was inadvisable to recruit a totally new investigative staff. And we felt it was far better to employ a limited group of very outstanding lawyers . . . to head a staff organization which under close supervision would work with various investigative agencies of the U.S. government, the FBI, CIA and Secret Service."

"I categorically deny that the investigation into the assassination was deficient," he said. "I have seen no new evidence which would change my view."

The seven-member commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren was established Nov. 29, 1963, by President Lyndon Johnson "to evaluate all the facts and circumstances surrounding the assassination" of Kennedy.

The members included Ford, Sens. Richard Russell (D-Ga.) and John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.), Rep. Hale Boggs (D-La.), director Allen W. Dulles of the CIA, and John McCloy, former U.S. high commissioner in Germany.