UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Mr. Mohr

DATE: December 12, 1963

FROM: C. D. DeLoach

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT

I had a long talk this morning with Congressman Gerald R. (Gerry) Ford (R. - Michigan) in his office. He asked that I come up to see him. Upon arriving he told me he wanted to talk in the strictest of confidence. This was agreed to.

Ford told me he was somewhat disturbed about the manner in which Chief Justice Warren was carrying on his Chairmanship of the Presidential Commission. He explained that the first mistake that Warren made was his attempt to establish a "one man commission" by appointing a Chief Counsel, Warren Olney, that was his own protege. Ford stated that after the mention of Olney's name by the Chief Justice, at their first meeting, Allen Dulles, former Director of CIA, protested quite violently. Because of Dulles' protest, the other members told Warren that they would like to know more about Olney prior to giving their consent.

On the occasion of their second meeting, Ford and Hale Boggs joined with Dulles. Hale Boggs told Warren flatly that Olney would not be acceptable and that he (Boggs) would not work on the Commission with Olney. Warren put up a stiff argument but a compromise was made when the name of Lee Rankin was mentioned. Warren stated he knew Rankin and could work with him.

Ford told me that he was currently having problems inasmuch as the majority of the members of the Commission desired to go along with the recommendation made in Deputy Attorney General Katzenbach's letter to the Commission dated 12-9-63. In this letter, Katzenbach recommended that the Commission make an immediate press release pointing out that the FBI report clearly showed there was no international conspiracy or collusion and that Oswald was a loner. Ford stated he was a minority of one that did not want to give out any press release until the Commission had had a thorough opportunity to review and discuss the FBI report. (I noted that the report was on his desk at the time of our meeting.)

1 - Mr. Belmont
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Evans
1 - Mr. Sullivan
1 - Mr. Jones

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I told Ford in strict confidence that the Director concurred with his viewpoint. I mentioned that our investigation thus far had conclusively shown that Oswald operated by himself and that Ruby additionally was a loner. However, FBI investigation was still pending on a large number of rumors, speculation and gossip and it, therefore, would be quite unfair for the Commission to take a stand prior to all the evidence being turned in. Ford stated this was his point entirely and that although he was a minority of one he intended to stick to his point.

Ford told me that John McCone, Director of CIA, had, approximately one week ago, gone up to his office and told him that CIA had uncovered some "startling information" in the Oswald case. McCone proceeded to tell Ford that a source of CIA's in Mexico had seen money exchange hands between Oswald and an unknown Cuban Negro. Ford stated this excited him greatly inasmuch as it definitely tended to show there was an international connection involved in the assassination of the President. This shows how garrulous McCone is. W

I told Ford that apparently McCone had failed to follow up on this matter. I mentioned that CIA's source had recanted his story and had indicated that it was a figment of his imagination. However, to prove the unstable tendencies of this source, the source had later claimed that he was actually telling the truth. I pointed out that we were still checking some angles of this, however, the CIA source was obviously either unstable or somewhat of a psychopathic liar. Ford stated he could certainly see this. When will we finish? W *

Ford indicated he would keep me thoroughly advised as to the activities of the Commission. He stated this would have to be on a confidential basis, however, he thought it should be done. He also asked if he could call me from time to time and straighten out questions in his mind concerning our investigation. I told him by all means he should do this. He reiterated that our relationship would, of course, remain confidential.

We have had excellent relations with Congressman Ford for many years. He has been given an autographed copy of the Director's book "A Study of Communism" and has been in touch with my office on numerous occasions in the past.

ACTION:

Contact will be maintained with Congressman Ford.

* See memo DeLoach to Mohr, 12-13-63, re: Ford, Gerald R. Self-Inter.