

New Doubts Raised Over the Warren Report

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 9—Key United States intelligence officials have long had doubts about the reliability of a purported Soviet defector whose statements apparently influenced the Warren Commission's conclusion that there had been no foreign involvement in President Kennedy's assassination, according to intelligence sources.

But neither the name of the defector, Lieut. Col. Yuri Ivanovich Nosenko, nor the suspicions of some officials about the legitimacy of his motives appear in the commission's final report or in any of the volumes of testimony and exhibits that accompanied it, according to Senate investigators who are re-examining the commission's inquiry.

An internal working memorandum of the commission, now in the hands of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, recounts in detail Mr. Nosenko's assurances that the K.G.B., the Soviet intelligence service, never tried to recruit Lee Harvey Oswald, Mr. Kennedy's assassin, during Oswald's residence in the Soviet Union.

Doubts about the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald acted alone have existed in some minds almost from the moment that the panel released its final report in September, 1964. But as internal commission documents like the working memorandum have become declassified in recent months, new questions have been raised in the Senate and elsewhere about the thoroughness of its investigation.

One of these questions, typified by the Nosenko matter, is the dual concern of whether the commission was fully informed by other Federal agencies of all of the relevant details surrounding the Kennedy assassination, and of how it weighed the information it did receive in reaching its conclusion.

"The statements of Nosenko," according to the memorandum's authors, W. David Slawson and William T. Coleman Jr., "if true, would certainly go a long way toward showing that the Soviet Union had no part in the assassination" of

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by Lack of Reference to a Purported

President Kennedy

Nothing in that memorandum, however, or in the nine-page interview of Mr. Nosenko by the Federal Bureau of Investigation on which it is based, reflects the considerable doubts that, the sources said, existed in the American intelligence community at the time about the legitimacy of the Soviet officer's motives for having come to the United States.

Two sources familiar with the Warren Commission's investigation said that while the panel had received no formal assertions of doubt about the colonel's legitimacy as a defector, the commission staff had been informally cautioned "that this man might have been sent over to allay our suspicions" about possible Soviet involvement in the Kennedy assassination.

One source declined to say from where such a cautionary advice had come, but the other said that he believed it had been offered by Richard Helms, the then Deputy Director of Central Intelligence who is now the American Ambassador to Iran.

John A. McCone was the Director of Central Intelligence at the time of the Kennedy assassination, on Nov. 22, 1963, and he was asked last May in an interview with CBS News why neither he nor Mr. Helms had cited Mr. Nosenko's assertions in their formal testimony before the Warren Commission.

Mr. McCone replied that it was a tradition among intelligence agencies not to accept a defector's statements "until we have proven beyond any doubt that the man is legitimate and the information is correct."

He added that "the bonafides of the man," which "were not known at the time of the testimony," had subsequently been established by the Central Intelligence Agency.

One former high-ranking

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Soviet Defector

American intelligence official took exception recently to that assertion, saying that the official doubts about Mr. Nosenko's motives, far from having been resolved, had increased as time went on.

"No doubt about it," a second former official said in a recent interview. "Nosenko was a phony. Nosenko was a notorious deception—he really screwed up everything."

This official said that his

conclusions, which had been shared by the C.I.A.'s counter-intelligence section, were based on a number of factors, including Mr. Nosenko's identification of an American television correspondent as a Soviet intelligence agent, an allegation that was later proved to be false.

A third source, one familiar with the F.B.I.'s investigation and debriefing of Mr. Nosenko after his arrival in the United States, recalled that "we did have some doubts about him, and they're probably recorded in the bureau—but we didn't let it out anywhere."

At the least, he said, the F.B.I. should have told the Warren Commission that "this information comes from a man of unknown reliability."

Neither the C.I.A. nor the F.B.I. would comment on the sources' assertions.

Other persons familiar with the record of the Warren Commission's investigation of the Kennedy assassination pointed out what they said were some oddities and anomalies that cast further doubt on the validity of Mr. Nosenko's testimony.

Mr. Nosenko's approach to representatives of the American Government with a request

for asylum, they said, came in Geneva on Feb. 4, 1964, barely 10 weeks after Mr. Kennedy was shot to death while riding in a motorecade in Dallas.

Although the colonel was identified at the time as a Soviet "disarmament expert" at a multinational conference there, he told the F.B.I. that in October, 1959, when Oswald arrived in Moscow with the intention of becoming a Soviet citizen, he had been in charge of the K.G.B. department that oversaw American tourists.

In that position, he said, he had been made privy to the details of the K.G.B.'s decision

shortly after his arrival that Oswald was too emotionally and politically unreliable to warrant cultivation by the Soviet intelligence service.

Mr. Nosenko said he had understood that some other agencies of the Soviet Government, including the Red Cross, had then taken the disgruntled American in hand. Intelligence sources pointed out, however, that the Soviet Red Cross is itself believed to be an arm of the K.G.B.

They also questioned Mr. Nosenko's assertion that Soviet citizens with whom Oswald had hunted rabbits during his

nearly three years in the Soviet Union had reported that the man was an "extremely poor shot."

The Senate intelligence committee recently designated two of its members, Richard S. Schweiker, Republican of Pennsylvania, and Gary Hart, Democrat of Colorado, to look into the growing number of questions about the circumstances surrounding the Kennedy assassination and the thoroughness of the Warren Commission's investigation.

Senator Schweiker said

through a spokesman today that he personally favored an extensive investigation by he select committee of all of the questions raised thus far about the scope of the Warren Commission's inquiry. Those questions are expected to include the extent to which the commission was apprised of the official doubts about Mr. Nosenko, and the consideration it gave that information.

Meanwhile, two interviews with Oswald by the F.B.I. in the summer of 1962, shortly after he returned from the Soviet Union, were reported today.

In each instance, according to the interview reports, Oswald agreed to the agents' request that, if he were to be sought out by Soviet intelligence operatives in this country for any reason, he would report the contact to the F.B.I.

Although the F.B.I. interviews with Oswald were provided by the bureau to the Warren Commission staff, the commission concluded in its report that "Oswald was not an informant or agent of the F.B.I." and that "no attempt was made" by it "to recruit him in any capacity."