

Ford Reported To FBI on Warren Panel

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Gerald Ford, as a congressman, apparently was the FBI's conduit to the early and supposedly secret proceedings of the Warren Commission in the first weeks after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, newly released documents disclosed.

This evident collaboration between the man who later became president and the late J. Edgar Hoover's FBI is made clear by an internal FBI memorandum dated Dec. 17, 1963, which details a number of items Ford passed along to Cartha D. DeLoach, assistant to the director.

THE MEMO, written to another Hoover aide named John P. Mohr less than three weeks after the Warren Commission began investigating the murders of Kennedy and his assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, reveals an exceedingly close relationship between Ford and the bureau at a time when the commission was supposed to be functioning in a quasi-judicial stance.

At one point DeLoach wrote that Ford was about to leave on a skiing vacation and wanted to take the FBI's report on the assassination with him but had no way of transporting it in complete safety.

"I told him I felt the director would want him to borrow from us one of our agent briefcases that contains a lock," DeLoach wrote. "If there are

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no objections, I will deliver an agent briefcase containing a lock to Congressman Ford tomorrow."

DeLoach also said Ford had stated, "I should call him at any time his assistance was needed."

A memorandum illustrates that the FBI was involved in what amounted to Washington alliances, as well as bitter feuds, with the CIA, the Dallas police department and the State Department in the first frantic days after Kennedy and Oswald were slain.

IN HIS INTERNAL REPORT, Hoover's No. 3 man said, "I told Congressman Ford in strict confidence that apparently Chief Justice (Earl) Warren was quite close to Drew Pearson and obviously used Pearson (a columnist) from time to time to get his thoughts across to the general public. I told Ford as he well knew, 98 percent of the facts in these articles were absolutely false."

Ford, according to the DeLoach memo, delivered what seems to be a somewhat backhanded compliment to the FBI. As DeLoach put it, "Congressman Ford told me that several members (of the commission) had been somewhat surprised, however pleased, that the FBI's report had been in narrative form rather than written in a straightforward, factual manner. I told him this, of course, was for the convenience of the commission."

Two members of the commission, Ford apparently reported to DeLoach, said they still were not convinced that the president had been shot from the sixth-floor window of the Texas School Book Depository.

"These members failed to understand the trajectory of the slugs that killed the president," according to DeLoach. "He (Ford) stated he felt this point would be discussed further but would represent no problem."

Three members of the commission expressed disappointment that U.E. Baughman, former chief of Secret Service, had seen fit to make a number of ill-advised remarks in the press concerning the operations of the Secret Service. The commission does not agree with Baughman, and criticized him quite thoroughly. They nevertheless plan to call him and take testimony."

AT THE COMMISSION'S meeting Dec. 16, DeLoach said, chief counsel Lee Rankin was authorized to hire two "so-called technicians." Ford apparently could only remember the last names of the two commission staffers, one a former police commissioner in New York listed only as Adams, and another a Chicago attorney named Jenner.

"Congressman Ford stated he raised the question as to checking the backgrounds of the individuals," the FBI official wrote. "He was told by Rankin that both of them had very satisfactory backgrounds and belonged to no organizations inimical to the best interests of the United States."

At this stage of events, Hoover had long since lost his fight to prevent the founding of a presiden-

tial commission, which he had resisted in the days immediately after the deaths of Kennedy and Oswald.

ACCORDING TO some of the 40,000 documents made public yesterday, the FBI:

- Accused CIA Director John McCone of attacking "the bureau in a vicious and underhanded manner characterized with sheer dishonesty," and suggested "there is a way of putting a stop to all this."
- Charged that Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry made false statements about the FBI and that if he did not correct them the FBI would label the statements as lies.
- Decided U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Thomas Mann "may be one of those pseudo-investigators" and called him a Sherlock Holmes because of statements he made that might have caused the FBI trouble later on.

Hoover himself directed that a Spanish-speaking FBI agent be sent to Mexico City to either refute or prove the allegations of what Oswald had done while in the Mexican capital a few weeks before Kennedy was shot in Dallas. Hoover did not sign the other documents, but Hoover was at the peak of his power in 1963 and was in personal charge of the FBI's investigation of the Kennedy and Oswald deaths.

There also was apparently contact between the FBI and The Washington Post in the days immediately after the assassination of Kennedy. According to an internal FBI document, DeLoach negotiated with the Post to get the newspaper to kill an editorial it was planning advocating the formation of a presidential commission to investigate the assassination.

THIS DELOACH MEMO does not say how the FBI knew the Post was planning such an editorial but made it clear that Hoover opposed a commission because he personally was supervising the investigation at the request of President Lyndon B. Johnson.

The Post's managing editor at the time, Alfred Friendly, first promised DeLoach the editorial would be eliminated but 40 minutes later retracted that "commitment," DeLoach told Hoover. DeLoach said that Friendly "obviously" had talked with J. Russell Wiggins, the editor of the Post.

The memo also says that deputy attorney general Nicholas deB. Katzenbach called Wiggins and asked him not to be "specific" about the kind of mechanism that should be used to investigate the assassination.

Two editorials on the subject appeared in the Post shortly after Kennedy's death, both calling

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for an inquiry by experienced investigators though not specifying where they should come from or under whose control they should operate.

Johnson decided to create what became the Warren Commission despite Hoover's objections.

According to a story in today's editions of the Post, neither Friendly nor Wiggins, both now retired, could recall an attempt by DeLoach to stop any editorials. Wiggins did remember Katzenbach's call, he told the Post, but it had no effect and "We wrote what we wanted."

THE CIA-FBI COLLISION had its origin over Oswald's trip to Mexico City, and what he did there, a few weeks before the Dallas slayings. Mexico City is one of the few world capitals where the FBI and CIA overlap on intelligence matters and both maintain well-manned offices.

D. J. Brennan Jr., an aide to the late Assistant Director William C. Sullivan, wrote his boss on Dec. 19, 1963, that the best way to protect FBI interests with the CIA was "a firm and forthright confrontation." He wrote in a memo to Sullivan that McCone had "allegedly informed Congressman Jerry Ford that the CIA had uncovered a plot in Mexico City indicating that Lee Harvey Oswald had received \$6,500 to assassinate President Kennedy."

He wrote that McCone had also made that statement to columnist Drew Pearson, but that the statements were false and "McCone should have known they were false since his agency was fully informed that the story concerning the receipt of the money in Mexico was completely discredited."

BRENNAN SUGGESTED that the FBI liaison agent, Sam Papich, confront McCone and said he believed McCone would "know where he stands and have a profound respect for our capabilities to be informed."

It is generally conceded that Oswald went to Mexico City, tried unsuccessfully to get into the Cuban and Soviet embassies to seek help in going back to the Marxist world. The facts in dispute in the first frantic days after Kennedy's death were over a report given both the CIA and FBI in Mexico City that Oswald had met with Cuban agents at an open air nightclub there and accepted more than \$6,000 in cash from them.

CIA sources informed The Washington Star of this report within 72 hours of Kennedy's death, but the story was not printed because the FBI said the informant was untrustworthy. The man was a Nicaraguan who was trying to earn an informer's fee and had made up the story, according to FBI officials with whom The Star checked at that time. The CIA called it an uncorroborated report and let it go at that.

THE CONTROVERSY involving the Dallas police chief erupted when Jesse Curry was interviewed on television and made comments that outraged FBI officials.

Curry said, according to an internal memo written by DeLoach, that the FBI had Oswald under surveillance in Dallas before the shooting but did not notify Dallas police, that the FBI had recently interviewed Oswald and that the FBI customarily advised Dallas police whenever an individual of subversive background arrived in town.

DeLoach ordered the FBI special agent in charge, Gordon Shanklin, to tell Curry if he didn't go back on television and inform the wire services immediately that his charges were false, the FBI in Washington would call these "false statements" a lie.

DeLoach wrote, "I asked him (Shanklin) if he knew why Chief Curry would make such stupid statements. Shanklin stated that Curry was usually very cooperative, a very good friend of the FBI, however, did not think very fast and obviously made the statements without giving any thought to the repercussions."

It subsequently became known that Curry was

correct in saying the FBI knew Oswald was in Dallas, and that special agent James Hosty had been to Oswald's house and had interviewed Oswald's Russian-born wife, Marina. This, it is now known, so incensed Oswald that he wrote a threatening note to the FBI. Hosty's name and phone number were found in Oswald's possession after Kennedy was killed.

The insistence that Curry withdraw his so-called "false" statements is even stranger in light of a memo from Assistant FBI Director A. H. Belmont to Hoover's alter ego, the late Clyde Tolson, written the same day that Kennedy died.

This memo said the Dallas FBI office knew at the outset that Oswald was the subject of an internal security-Cuba case, that he worked at the Texas School Book Depository from where the fatal shots were fired, and that FBI agents had interviewed Oswald twice regarding his stay in Russia and whether he was given an assignment by the Russians.

The FBI, according to the Belmont memo on Nov. 22, 1963, knew about his stay in the Soviet Union, his membership in the pro-Castro Fair Play for Cuba Committee, his arrest in New Orleans and even that he had a violent temper and a new baby. Shanklin, according to the memo, said this information had been furnished by the Dallas police.

The mystery is why Curry apologized for saying the FBI had not told the Dallas police about Oswald before Kennedy was killed, which it may not have done. But at least half of the Curry statement appears to have been accurate and perhaps all of it was.

IN 1963 it was not a federal crime to shoot a president of the United States and the assassination was in the sole jurisdiction of the Dallas police, in whose station a hanger-on named Jack Ruby killed Oswald less than 48 hours after Kennedy was slain.

After Oswald's death the FBI got in its final dig at the Dallas police. On Nov. 27 one of Hoover's top aides, C. L. McGowan, telephoned instructions to the FBI in Dallas.

So that Hoover could prepare a full memorandum for President Johnson, the Dallas FBI was instructed to send a massive amount of information to Washington. Among the information desired, the memorandum said, was police involvement, the police connections of Ruby and the connection between Ruby and the officer killed by Oswald, Pvt. J. D. Tippitt.

The FBI in Washington also wanted to know the nature of security provided in the areas and the admission of outsiders, presumably to the Dallas police station where Oswald was killed.

Although Hoover, in responding to letters immediately following the assassination, pointed out that the Secret Service and not the FBI was responsible for presidential protection, he quickly gained control of the bureaucratic battle, according to the FBI files.

Hoover also responded to several indignant correspondents, who blamed the FBI, by pointing out that the bureau was not responsible for the assassination. Secret Service Chief James J. Rowley told the FBI, however, that "there is no question but that the FBI is completely handling the Oswald investigation and his service is ready to assist in anyway," according to the FBI files.

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