

Schweiker Finds No Cuban Connection

Senator Still Pushes for New Kennedy Assassination Probe

Like a house of cards, it (the Warren Commission Report) is going to collapse.

— Sen. Richard S. Schweiker in an interview last fall.

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Washington — The house of cards is shaky, but it still stands.

After six months of searching, Sen. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.), has failed to come up with that explosive fact that would blow apart the conclusions of the commission report on President John F. Kennedy's assassination — that Lee Harvey Oswald acting alone killed the President.

He has unearthed repeated evidence of the withholding of critical information from the Warren Commission. Both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency denied information and misled the commission, Schweiker believes.

The proof has been laid out in a detailed report which Schweiker hopes will be released to the public in about two weeks. But even he concedes that

the report appears insufficient, on its own, to push Congress into reopening a full-scale inquiry into the assassination.

Schweiker's hope, he said in an interview, is that the report and continuing investigation would unearth enough evidence to force a reopening of the Warren Commission's inquiry.

Very Diligent

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities voted last week to release the report, which has been prepared by Schweiker and Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.), who formed a subcommittee on the assassination.

Schweiker said it would "raise some very fundamental questions that an official board had not had the courage to raise before" about the assassination inquiry.

He refused to discuss the findings, but he called them "detailed" and "carefully researched." He said he will resolve the question of whether the CIA and FBI had carelessly withheld information.

Schweiker would not disclose whether the report found the deception by Oswald, but the tone of his remarks at the beginning of the inquiry had implied he thought they were delusory.

From the start, for instance, he complained that the Warren Commission relied entirely on the two agencies to do its investigation. On Friday, he said, "I've become more and more apparent that this was a fundamental mistake."

Needle in Haystack

Deserting the "house of cards" metaphor, Schweiker turned to the one he now prefers. "It's like looking for a needle in a haystack," he said. "Now we know in what part of the haystack to look. We're narrowing the inquiry."

Schweiker said the field has been narrowed to Oswald's "Cuban connection." He worked with both pro-Castro and anti-Castro groups, and somewhere therein lies the key to why he shot Kennedy, if he did, Schweiker said.

Some have suggested that it also could explain why the agencies were reluctant to give information to the Warren Commission. It could lead the commission toward discovering CIA plots on the life of Premier Fidel Castro, they have said.

Schweiker said his committee failed to conclude why the intelligence agencies would want to withhold evidence, or whether Oswald had ties to the FBI or CIA at the time of the assassination.

Those should be resolved by "phase 2" of the inquiry, he said.

Study Goes On

The new Senate Intelligence oversight committee, in its first meeting last Thursday, agreed to continue a staff study of the Warren Commission report. After six months or more, said Sen. Daniel J. Inoué (D-Hawaii), the chairman, the committee will consider whether a full new inquiry is warranted.

Schweiker, who was not named to the new committee, said he hopes it will continue following up leads, the "hitches" to continue investigating on his own, he said.

The problem, Schweiker concedes, is that it is difficult to get the inquiry reopened without evidence contradicting the basic Warren Commission "finding" that Oswald acting alone killed Kennedy. Few Senators want to reopen the inquiry for less.

Schweiker was restricted by his committee to examining only the role of the intelligence agencies. In the Warren Commission study, he claims his findings show a "stagnant and misleading report" that misled many crucial facts, but he has not attempted to find out Oswald's ties to Kennedy, whether they would be responsive to the study or different, he said.

Schweiker speculated, "The answer is, nobody knows."