

News Analysis: From Katzenbach to Hart on JFK

Report bares decade

Mark Lane

of deception

Just three days after the assassination of President John Kennedy, Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach sent a letter to the White House stating that "the public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and that the evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial." The Katzenbach directive to the White House continued, "Speculation about Oswald's motivation ought to be cut off."

At that time, while Katzenbach insisted that the White House should condemn Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone assassin, the Warren Commission had not yet been appointed and the FBI investigation into the crime had barely gotten underway. Katzenbach recognized the need for the establishment of some apparatus to support his rush to judgment and he urged the White House to act since "we should have some basis for rebutting thought that there was 'a communist conspiracy' or 'a right wing conspiracy.'" Thus before Oswald had been dead for twenty-four hours the extremists of the center were moving to cover up the facts.

Even more illuminating of the shadowy role played by Katzenbach was the letter that he sent to each member of the Warren Commission on December 9, 1963, urging that the Commission immediately issue a press release stating that Oswald was the lone assassin. Had the Commission acted favorably upon that directive its image of integrity would likely have been thoroughly compromised for the Commission was not even to call its first witness until two more months had passed.

The Katzenbach correspondence, suppressed for twelve and one-half years, was uncovered, along with other evidence, by the Church Committee, and published in the Committee's final report last

week. This historic work was accomplished under the auspices of Sen. Richard Schweiker (R-Pa.) and Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) in D.C. is pretty much a chain-of-command town with the pecking order fairly well established and adhered to. Therefore the question arises: On whose behalf was a Deputy Attorney General sending directives to the new President and then to the members of the President's Commission, including its Chairman, the Chief Justice of the United States? At a news conference held in conjunction with the release of the report, Sen. Schweiker stated that he would like to see that question answered and urged that it could be arranged if Katzenbach was ordered to explain his role while under oath in an appearance before a Congressional investigating committee.

In its report the Senate Intelligence Committee concluded that it had "divulged" evidence which impeaches the process by which the intelligence agencies arrived at their own conclusions about the assassination, and by which they provided information to the Commission. The report continued, "This evidence indicates that the investigation of the assassination was deficient and that facts which might have substantially affected the course of the investigation were not provided to the Warren Commission or those



DEATH DAY for John F. Kennedy. He appeared to greet a crowd of people who had been unable to get tickets to a breakfast sponsored by the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce, November 22, 1963. To his right is Edward Baines Johnson. To Kennedy's rear is Texas Governor John Connally and (left) Senator Frank W. Yarborough. (Photo by World Wide)

individuals within the FBI and the CIA, as well as other agencies of Government, who were charged with investigating the assassination.

The significance of that finding should be examined in light of the Warren Commission's early decision to secure no independent investigators and to rely instead for information upon the FBI, the CIA and the other existing police agencies. The method chosen by the Warren Commission from getting the facts was simple yet ingenious. The report reveals that "Senior FBI officials," "Senior CIA officials," and "Senior

Government officials" were in possession of evidence which might have been invaluable to the Commission. These senior officials appointed middle echelon bureaucrats to liaison with their opposite numbers at the Warren Commission and to share with the Commission representatives the evidence with which they were familiar.

By the mere expedient of denying the middle echelon officials access to the decisive material the police agencies had constructed an obstacle which was effective and invisible, invisible because those charged with the responsibility of briefing the Commission were acting in good faith and gave the appearance that they were carrying out their assignments fully. The intelligence cover-up was operated on the old intelligence "need to know basis" and the middle echelon representatives in many cases did not know how they had been utilized until they testified before the Senate Committee.

Senator Schweiker, who played the major part in directing the work of the Senate Committee, recently summed up the implications of the Warren report. He said that the Warren Commission's conclusions, including the

conclusion that Oswald was the lone assassin, have been rendered invalid since the basic evidence has been admitted to the Commission. The Commission is responsible for the failure to secure independent investigators and to rely instead for information upon the FBI, the CIA and the other existing police agencies. The method chosen by the Warren Commission from getting the facts was simple yet ingenious. The report reveals that "Senior FBI officials," "Senior CIA officials," and "Senior Government officials" were in possession of evidence which might have been invaluable to the Commission. These senior officials appointed middle echelon bureaucrats to liaison with their opposite numbers at the Warren Commission and to share with the Commission representatives the evidence with which they were familiar. By the mere expedient of denying the middle echelon officials access to the decisive material the police agencies had constructed an obstacle which was effective and invisible, invisible because those charged with the responsibility of briefing the Commission were acting in good faith and gave the appearance that they were carrying out their assignments fully. The intelligence cover-up was operated on the old intelligence "need to know basis" and the middle echelon representatives in many cases did not know how they had been utilized until they testified before the Senate Committee. Senator Schweiker, who played the major part in directing the work of the Senate Committee, recently summed up the implications of the Warren report. He said that the Warren Commission's conclusions, including the

conclusion that Oswald was the lone assassin, have been rendered invalid since the basic evidence has been admitted to the Commission. The Commission is responsible for the failure to secure independent investigators and to rely instead for information upon the FBI, the CIA and the other existing police agencies. The method chosen by the Warren Commission from getting the facts was simple yet ingenious. The report reveals that "Senior FBI officials," "Senior CIA officials," and "Senior Government officials" were in possession of evidence which might have been invaluable to the Commission. These senior officials appointed middle echelon bureaucrats to liaison with their opposite numbers at the Warren Commission and to share with the Commission representatives the evidence with which they were familiar. By the mere expedient of denying the middle echelon officials access to the decisive material the police agencies had constructed an obstacle which was effective and invisible, invisible because those charged with the responsibility of briefing the Commission were acting in good faith and gave the appearance that they were carrying out their assignments fully. The intelligence cover-up was operated on the old intelligence "need to know basis" and the middle echelon representatives in many cases did not know how they had been utilized until they testified before the Senate Committee.

Senator Schweiker, who played the major part in directing the work of the Senate Committee, recently summed up the implications of the Warren report. He said that the Warren Commission's conclusions, including the conclusion that Oswald was the lone assassin, have been rendered invalid since the basic evidence has been admitted to the Commission. The Commission is responsible for the failure to secure independent investigators and to rely instead for information upon the FBI, the CIA and the other existing police agencies. The method chosen by the Warren Commission from getting the facts was simple yet ingenious. The report reveals that "Senior FBI officials," "Senior CIA officials," and "Senior Government officials" were in possession of evidence which might have been invaluable to the Commission. These senior officials appointed middle echelon bureaucrats to liaison with their opposite numbers at the Warren Commission and to share with the Commission representatives the evidence with which they were familiar. By the mere expedient of denying the middle echelon officials access to the decisive material the police agencies had constructed an obstacle which was effective and invisible, invisible because those charged with the responsibility of briefing the Commission were acting in good faith and gave the appearance that they were carrying out their assignments fully. The intelligence cover-up was operated on the old intelligence "need to know basis" and the middle echelon representatives in many cases did not know how they had been utilized until they testified before the Senate Committee.

conference. It was explained that Hart had been detained on another matter.

In fact, with members of the Citizens Commission on Inquiry had been visiting Schweiker's office earlier in the day. CBS called to inform Schweiker that Hart was going to boycott the conference.

The other matter Hart was a junior senator. It was an effort to understand the role of the Committee of which he was a member. He had informed the media the night before that the report which was about to be released would be highly critical of the administration and that the Senate Committee was investigating the administration's conduct. It was noted that Hart had been in the Senate for a long time and that he had been a member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The report was expected to be released in the next few days.

Media attention was also given to the reports that had been received by the House. It was noted that the House was also investigating the administration's conduct. The reports were expected to be released in the next few days.

Senator [Name] has been dead for twenty-four hours, the extremist

The report was expected to be released in the next few days. It was noted that the Senate Committee was investigating the administration's conduct. The report was expected to be released in the next few days.

The report was expected to be released in the next few days. It was noted that the Senate Committee was investigating the administration's conduct. The report was expected to be released in the next few days.

