

# Hoover Second-Guesser, Warren Report Shows

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Chicago Daily News

## Washington

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's attack on the Warren Commission for its slap at the FBI appears to be clearly—if inadvertently—refuted by the full transcript of testimony given by one of the Commission's most prestigious witnesses: J. Edgar Hoover himself.

That's just one of the fascinating sidelights and insights into Hoover and his agency to be found in the 23 pages the director's testimony released Monday by the Commission on the assassination of President Kennedy.

The Nation's most respected law enforcement officer just last week ripped the Warren Report's critique of the FBI as "a classic case of Monday morning quarterbacking."

Yet in his own testimony, Hoover repeatedly does the same thing, second-guessing — after the fact — the State Department, the Dallas police, and even his own agents.

The nature of Hoover's testimony also tends to confirm something that was only rumored last spring: shouldn't "be given some special attention?"

That as far back as May 16, when he testified, Hoover apparently knew almost exactly what the Commission's carefully guarded conclusions and criticisms—finally published September 28—would be.

For Hoover clearly set out to answer those criticisms in advance—sometimes running away with the question-and-answer session—before the Commission even had a chance to ask many of its questions.

### ACTIVITIES

A more carefully coordinated treatment of the Oswald case by the FBI might well have resulted in Lee Harvey Oswald's activities being brought to the attention of the Secret Service in time to head off the tragedy, the blue-ribbon panel suggested.

This is what Hoover called "Monday morning quarterbacking."

Yet in his testimony, he acknowledged that the FBI failure to do that very thing, prior to the assassination, constituted "a gap" in the protection of the President.

A Commission member, Senator John Sherman Cooper (Rep-Ky.) asked Hoover if, in the light of their expressed intent at one time to become Communists, the 36 defectors that have since come back to this country

Shouldn't this be done, he asked, "to determine whether they are a risk . . . or in fact (have) become dangerous?"

### REPLY

Hoover replied that "we have taken steps to plug that gap."

"In December of last year," he explained, "we expanded the criteria of what should be furnished to the Secret Service, and all defectors automatically go on the list to be furnished the Secret Service."

"As a matter of general precaution, as a result of the Oswald affair, we are seeing that all go to the Secret Service."

Elsewhere in his testimony, Hoover objected that this broadened criterion was resulting in the FBI passing on to the President's protectors the names of "all sorts of cranks, kooks, college students" and others whom the FBI did not believe constituted a genuine threat to the President.

But nowhere did he criticize the newly adopted procedure of alerting the Secret Service to the whereabouts of defectors.

### DISCIPLINE

In fact, while criticizing the Commission for "Monday morning quarterbacking," Hoover has quietly disciplined three FBI agents for

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their handling of the Oswald matter.

While deriding the Commission for exercising hindsight, Hoover himself:

- Claimed that if the FBI had been handling the assassination probe, instead of the Dallas police department, details of the investigation would never have been leaked to the press, and Oswald never would have been gunned down by nightclub owner Jack Ruby ("Rubenstein" as Hoover repeatedly called him).

- Declared that Oswald was "no doubt a dedicated Communist," even after he recanted his faith in Russian communism and asked to come back to the United States.

"As I look back on it," Hoover said, "I don't believe that he ever changed his views."

Yet elsewhere in the report, Hoover affirmed that his agents had interviewed Oswald at least three times with a view of detecting his sympathies, and could find no substantial proof that he was still an avowed Communist.