

Procedures in Defector Cases Revised by the State Department

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 30—A review of its experiences with Lee Harvey Oswald has led the State Department to adopt some new procedures in dealing with defectors and other suspicious persons.

Officials have developed what they believe to be an improved system to alert them to the travel plans of persons with a record of unusual conduct. The department is also arranging for "better" ways of conveying information to intelligence agencies, as recommended by the Warren commission's report on the assassination of President Kennedy.

Even with hindsight, however, officials have found it difficult to quarrel with the policies and judgments that enabled Oswald, the assassin, to retain his American citizenship, almost against his wish, then to return to the United States with a Russian wife and with a loan from his Government, and, a year later, to obtain a passport for a planned trip to the Soviet Union and other countries.

An Ever-Present Conflict

The Warren commission did not criticize those policies and judgments. But it cautioned the State Department to take "great care" in similar situations in the future.

At the core of the problem is the always present conflict between national security and individual rights, or simply humanitarian considerations, officials said.

For example, there is no formal policy to help American diplomats decide whether or when they should grant or delay a person's request to renounce his citizenship. Nor is there any explicit instruction about whether officials should help or hinder a defector who wishes to return home.

These and other questions were raised in the Oswald case. Each time Oswald was given every possible benefit of every doubt. He was protected against his decision to expatriate himself and was later helped to return quickly to the United States.

Loans to Defectors Halted

Whether the Government should extend such protection even to persons with a tendency toward disloyalty is basically a philosophical question that should perhaps be considered at the very top of the Administration, officials believe. It has not been considered there to date, they report.

Some steps, however, have been taken.

Even before the assassination but after Oswald returned in

specially marked in the files. If such a person then applied for a new passport or opened other dealings with the Department, his background would become quickly known and, officials hope, reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other interested agencies.

Persons who had lost their citizenship could not obtain American passports. Persons with debts to the Government would first have to settle the accounts. Persons who repeatedly became stranded abroad with out funds might be refused passports. Former defectors would have their cases reviewed in detail before new passports were issued.

The lookout cards at the State Department are sought by file clerks whenever a field office requests guidance in a consular matter. There is still a possibility of human error, therefore, and some officials have begun to think of acquiring machines to do the job.

June, 1962, Abba P. Schwartz, administrator of the State Department's Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, halted the practice of helping returning defectors with transportation loans.

After the assassination, a review of Oswald's transactions with the Government revealed some serious administrative lapses that led to the omission of his name from the State Department's "lookout file."

Special Notations in Files

Under new procedures, officials hope that every defector, expatriate or person with an unpaid transportation loan will be