

JFK Leads Held Not

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CIA Memo Says Foreign Conspiracy

By David C. Martin
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A Central Intelligence Agency memo says the Warren Commission should have given more credence to the possibility that President Kennedy's assassination was the result of a foreign conspiracy, particularly in light of two promising leads that were not pursued.

"The Warren Commission report should have left a wider window for this contingency," according to a CIA memo written in May, 1975, at the request of the Rockefeller commission. "That, indeed, was the opinion at the working level, particularly in the counterintelligence component in the CIA in 1964," the memo says.

The 27-page document stresses that solid evidence to overturn the Warren Commission's finding that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing Kennedy on Nov. 22, 1963, "did (and does) not exist in Washington. But such evidence could exist in Moscow and/or Havana."

The two most promising leads to such evidence are testimony about 1959 contacts between Oswald and Cuban officials and a public threat by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro against the lives of U.S. leaders, according to the memo.

Both leads must be considered of significant in investigating a possible foreign conspiracy, but neither was followed up, the memo says.

Entitled "Review of Selected Items in the Lee Harvey Oswald File Regarding Allegations of the Castro Cuban Involvement in the John F. Kennedy Assassina-

tion," the memo was among some 1,600 pages of documents on the assassination that the CIA turned over to the Rockefeller commission. The files have since been turned over to the Senate intelligence committee, where a panel headed by Sen. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.) is investigating the Kennedy slaying.

The documents have been declassified by the CIA in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed by David W. Belin, who served as counsel to both the Rockefeller and Warren commissions.

Belin, one of the staunchest defenders of the Warren Commission report, has called for a reopening of the investigation, saying disclosure of all the evidence would restore public confidence in the commission's findings.

The CIA released a separate set of the foot-high pile of documents to the Associated Press Friday.

The name of the memo's author has been deleted, but Belin said in an interview it was written by Raymond Rocca, a former member of the agency's counterintelligence staff.

In the memo, Rocca cites the testimony before the Warren Commission of Nelson Delgado, Oswald's closest friend during training at California's Parris Marine Corps base in 1959. The Warren report noted that Oswald told Delgado he was in touch with Cuban diplomatic officials.

But, according to the memo, "Delgado's testimony says a lot more of possible operational significance than is reflected by the lan-



DAVID W. BELIN
... seeks disclosure

guage of the report, and its implications do not appear to have been run down or developed by investigation."

In the memo, Rocca cites Delgado's testimony that Oswald told him "right after he had his conversation with the Cuban people ... that he was going to—once he got out of the service—was going to Switzerland."

Oswald applied to Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland in March, 1959, was discharged from the Marines in September of that year and entered the Soviet Union the following month, Rocca notes.

Delgado's testimony is "of germinal significance to any review of the background of Lee Harvey Oswald's feeling toward and relations with Castro's Cuba," Rocca adds.

At the time he wrote the memo, Rocca, who had served as CIA liaison with the Warren Commission, was

Followed Up

Possibility Not Pursued

working for the agency as a consultant. A cover letter states that "the attached review represents the research and analysis of an individual officer... and does not necessarily represent the position of this agency."

Castro's threat against the lives of U.S. leaders was made Sept. 7, 1963, during an "impromptu" interview with AP correspondent Daniel Baker in Havana. "There can be no question... that this event represented a more-than-ordinary attempt to get a message on the record in the United States," Rocca maintains in his memo.

Rocca notes that the story appeared in the New York Times where Lee Harvey Oswald resided and quoted Castro as saying that "U.S. leaders would be in danger if they helped in any attempt to do away with leaders of Cuba."

Rocca's memo makes no mention of CIA plots to kill Castro in the early 1960s, but large portions of

the declassified version have been deleted.

Oswald, who according to the testimony of his wife Marina and others was an avid newspaper reader, saw the story. "It must be considered of great significance

in the light of the pathological evaluation of Oswald's

massive aggressive makeup... irrespective of whether there was any formal handling or even security service contact with Oswald by the Cubans of the Mustangs," Rocca says.

However, he adds, "There is no evidence in the files of the Kennedy assassination that this Castro interview was considered in following up leads."

Although the CIA reportedly directed its headquarters attention to the AP story very shortly after the Dallas killing,

Felt has since called for a re-opening of the Warren Commission's investigation, saying it would restore public confidence in the report's findings.

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