

Hearings to End:

## Assassinations Unit to Probe Ruby's Links to Organized Crime; Hears Ford on FBI

The final week of House hearings on the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy was expected to continue the committee's investigation into the possibility that a conspiracy was behind the crime.

In testimony Sept. 18-19, the Select Committee on Assassinations heard evidence about the possibility of Cuban involvement in Kennedy's death. A committee member said the following week's hearings would consider the possibility that organized crime figures had links with Jack Ruby, the Dallas nightclub operator who shot Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey Oswald.

"The Warren Commission was wrong when it concluded that Ruby had no connection with organized crime," the member said. "He did and we'll prove that he did."

Reviewing the mass of evidence presented by scientific experts in the first phase of the hearings, the member said the evidence seemed clear that Oswald alone had committed the crime, but the question of motive was still unanswered. (*Previous hearings, Weekly Report p. 2497*)

"We've established a lone assassin theory," the member said. "The only thing we're left with is the possibility that he was a hired assassin."

### Castro Denial

Evidence presented to the committee Sept. 19 included a tape recording of an April interview by House investigators with Cuban President Fidel Castro, who denied having any involvement in the assassination and described the idea as "insane."

"That would have been the most perfect pretext for the United States to invade our country, which is what I have tried to prevent for all these years, in every possible sense," Castro told the interviewers.

Asked about a statement made to an Associated Press reporter 10 weeks before the Kennedy slaying, in which he warned that plots against him could backfire, Castro said the statement was not given as a threat.

"I did not mean to threaten by that," he said. "... I did not mean that we were going to take measures, similar measures, like a retaliation for that."

Castro called "absurd" a report that he knew in advance of an assassination threat against Kennedy. The committee said in a statement that a confidential U.S. government source had told the committee the story might have some substance.

The story also was denied Sept. 18 by two former Cuban consuls in Mexico City and a consulate secretary, who testified regarding a one-week trip Oswald took to Mexico two months before the assassination.

Two of the three witnesses confirmed that it was indeed Oswald who applied for a transit visa to Cuba during a Sept. 27, 1963, visit to the consulate. Committee sources said that handwriting analysis had confirmed that the Oswald who signed the document was the same man captured in Dallas.

—By Bob Livernash

The only dissent was from former consul Eusebio Azcue Lopez, who said he thought there were two Oswalds, and that the man who visited the consulate was not the same man who killed Kennedy. The Oswald shown in assassination pictures, Azcue said, seemed younger and heavier than the man who came to the consulate.

### Ford Testimony

The committee heard from former President Ford Sept. 21 as part of its examination of the handling of the investigation by the FBI and other federal agencies. Ford, then a House member, served on the Warren Commission.

Ford admitted that the Warren Commission investigation probably would have been broadened had the commission known of CIA plots to kill Castro.

Ford, one of only three surviving members of the commission, said knowledge of the CIA plots "certainly would have required the commission to extend its inquiry into those operations."

"But I don't think they, in and of themselves, would have changed the conclusions," he added.

Ford testified that he didn't understand why the commission had not been told about the CIA plots when one of its members was Allen W. Dulles, a former director of the intelligence agency.

"I had the feeling then that we were getting all the information from the agencies, including the CIA. Obviously, some information, such as on the assassination plots, was not given to us," Ford said. "Why we weren't given it, I frankly don't understand."

Ford added that former CIA Director Richard Helms had given the commission a long memorandum on the possibility of a conspiracy involving Cuba.

Ford acknowledged that for a time he briefed a top FBI official about organizational problems when the Warren Commission was beginning its work. He said there were only two such briefings, and that they stopped when the investigative phase began.

### FBI Witnesses

James H. Gale, a retired assistant director of the FBI, told the committee Sept. 20 that Oswald should have been on the FBI's list of subversives, but even if he had it would not have prevented the assassination.

Gale said he was in charge of the investigation that led FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to discipline 17 FBI employees for not putting Oswald on the list.

James R. Malley, a former FBI inspector who supervised the FBI investigation in Dallas, said the bureau had conducted a thorough investigation of various conspiracy theories before agreeing with the Warren Commission conclusion that Oswald acted alone.

Malley said the possibility of a conspiracy was a constant preoccupation, and that the bureau had looked into the possibility of Cuban involvement and the possible involvement of organized crime in the assassination.

Told by committee investigators that some FBI officials directly involved in organized crime cases had never been asked about the case, Malley insisted that crime syndicate connections had been checked and that other organized-crime agents in the bureau must have been contacted.

Malley said he had never heard Hoover object to the Warren Commission. Hoover reportedly was unhappy with the formation of the commission.