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INSPECTOR GENERAL
76-2408

24 June 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Senators Church and Schweiker News Conference
Concerning Release of Senate Select Committee
Warren Commission Report

1. The following is a summary of the 23 June 1976 news conference sponsored by Senators Church and Schweiker concerning the release of the Senate Select Committee report relating to the investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy:

Senator Church opened the news conference with a brief statement outlining the history of the Senate Select Committee and indicated that this report represents the last of five reports issued by the Committee during its tenure. Senator Church praised Senator Schweiker and Senator Hart for their investigation concerning the Kennedy assassination and said that the report's central conclusion is that senior officials of both the CIA and the FBI failed to turn over relevant information to the Warren Commission. Senator Church indicated that the reasons for the failure to turn over this relevant information are unclear and then quoted from the report to the effect that the possibility exists that this non-disclosure was intentional. Senator Church concluded his opening statement by recommending that the matter be referred to the newly created oversight committee with the recommendation that the committee continue this investigation to resolve unanswered questions.

Senator Church then gave the floor to Senator Schweiker. Attached hereto is a copy of Senator Schweiker's opening statement. Following Senator Schweiker's reading of this statement the news conference was opened to questions from reporters.

A general description of the questions and responses thereto follows:

QUESTION: The report states there is no hard evidence of a conspiracy. Is there circumstantial evidence?

Senator Schweiker answered that the report leaves unanswered many questions that need to be resolved and there is sufficient evidence to warrant additional investigation.

QUESTION: Why isn't Senator Hart here?

Senator Schweiker replied that Senator Hart had supported him fully throughout the investigation but that Senator Hart had been detained at another engagement and had called Senator Schweiker only minutes before the start of the press conference to indicate that he could not be present.

QUESTION: What are the names of the senior intelligence officers who withheld information from the Warren Commission?

Senator Schweiker replied that Hoover and Helms failed to provide the Warren Commission with all relevant information but beyond those two individuals the investigation has not been completed.

QUESTION: Allen Dulles who was a member of the Warren Commission knew about assassination plots against Castro. Why didn't he provide the Warren Commission with this data?

Senator Schweiker replied that there is no indication any other member besides Allen Dulles knew of the assassination plots.

QUESTION: Were there any important facts left out of the report for security reasons?

Senator Schweiker replied in the negative.

QUESTION: Was there a conspiracy to cover up?

Senator Schweiker replied that neither Helms of the CIA nor Hoover of the FBI told the Warren Commission, nor individuals within their respective agencies responsible for investigating the assassination of President Kennedy, of plots to assassinate Castro.

QUESTION: Have you referred this matter to the Justice Department?

Senator Schweiker replied that he had taken no action in this regard and intended to leave this matter to the judgment of the oversight committee.

QUESTION: What is left to be done in the way of investigation?

Senator Schweiker replied that the question of how high up and the purpose of the "cover up" needs to be pursued, as well as several other leads not identified within the report.

QUESTION: Why has the oversight committee (Senator Inouye) stated that they will not decide for six months whether to take up this matter?

Senator Schweiker replied that he has talked to Senator Inouye and that Senator Inouye has promised to bring this matter before the oversight committee.

QUESTION: Was AMLASH a double agent?

Senator Schweiker replied that the Cuban government had an excellent intelligence network in the US and the question of whether AMLASH was a double agent and whether Castro knew of AMLASH's activities with CIA is very important issue.

QUESTION: You have indicated that you do not have faith in the Warren Commission investigation, therefore, do you then not believe that Oswald was the lone assassin?

Senator Schweiker replied that the Warren Commission was missing several ingredients when they made their investigation and therefore he (Schweiker) could make no decision on the matter.

QUESTION ADDRESSED TO SEN. CHURCH: Do you agree with Senator Schweiker that there was a cover up?

Senator Church stated yes, he agreed with the report and the decision to publish it, however, Helms has not been fully interrogated on this matter and there are several important leads that need to be followed up. Senator Church stated that Helms was interrogated but the committee did not have time to complete the whole chain of necessary questions. As an example one response Helms gave before the committee as to why he had not informed the Warren Commission of the plots against Castro was that "no one asked him."

Senator Schweiker commented that more leads are coming in even now. Many of those leads are not in the report and that people are volunteering information on this even now.

QUESTION: Is there enough evidence to reopen a full scale investigation of the Kennedy assassination?

Senator Schweiker replied that if Oswald had been convicted the trial would later have been declared a mistrial solely on the basis of the FBI's destruction of Oswald's note in the Dallas office. He added that yes there is enough evidence to open a full scale investigation, but the next step would be for the oversight committee to pursue the leads.

QUESTION ADDRESSED TO SENATOR CHURCH: Would you require further evidence before you feel that a full scale hearing should be convened?

Senator Church replied yes, this is incomplete and there is not enough evidence yet to open a full scale hearing. However, it should be investigated further.

QUESTION ADDRESSED TO SENATOR CHURCH: Was there a reason for the cover up?

Senator Church replied he had no judgment on that. There could be many reasons "we just don't know."

QUESTION: How far up did the cover up go?

Senator Schweiker replied that he doesn't know, his committee ran out of time to pursue this and this is the next logical lead to pursue. He added that Mr. McCone has testified that he did not know of CIA attempts to assassinate Castro. Senator Church interjected that the state of the investigation does not show whether there was a conscious effort to cover up.

Senator Church said there could be several other reasons such as one frequently pointed out that since Allen Dulles was on the Warren Commission there was no need to tell the Commission.

QUESTION: Are any of the participants in the cover up still employed by the CIA or FBI?

Senator Schweiker replied it would be unfair to answer this question and that there could or could not be current employees involved.

QUESTION: What about the interest of President Johnson in 1967?

Senator Schweiker replied again this was an example where they did not fully reopen the investigation and conducted only a pro forma inquiry where several important leads "fell through the cracks."

QUESTION: Is there any new information in the report?

Senator Schweiker replied a couple of leads such as Cuban intelligence agents moving in flights in cockpits within Mexico and the US and then on to Cuba.

QUESTION: Do you know that the man riding in the cockpit of the aircraft was a Cuban intelligence agent?

Senator Schweiker replied that there is strong evidence that one of the Cubans mentioned in one of these two leads in the report was a Cuban intelligence agent.

QUESTION: What are other motives in President Kennedy's assassination?

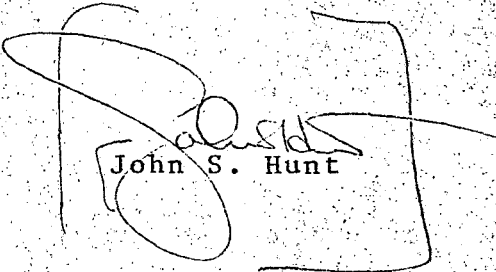
Senator Schweiker replied that he hated to speculate on this matter and that it could have been Castro retaliation, retaliation by anti-Castro groups or it could even involve the Mafia.

QUESTION: Since you say Mr. Helms did not fulfill his responsibility in this regard, what are you doing to terminate his ambassadorship?

Senator Schweiker replied he had made no judgment on this matter and will wait for the oversight committee continuance of the investigation.

(This was the last question and the news conference ended.)

2. The above description of the question and answer period during the news conference was compiled from notes taken by the undersigned and should not be treated as a verbatim transcript or complete account of all that was stated.



John S. Hunt