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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

on

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

(Subcommittee on Assassination of President John F. Kennedy)

ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Washington, D. C.

Thursday, November 16, 1978

Official Reporters to Committees

October 11, 1978

Mr. G. Robert Blakey
Chief Counsel and Director
Select Committee on Assassinations
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Blakey,

I have read the transcript of the testimony of the CIA's representative, Mr. John L. Hart, before your Committee on September 15, 1978.

As the former deputy chief of the CIA's Soviet Bloc Division, so prominently and so disparagingly featured in that testimony, I may be able to help the Committee to judge CIA's investigation of Lee Harvey Oswald's sojourn in the Soviet Union, as reported by Yuri Nosenko.

Specifically, I can correct certain misleading impressions left by Mr. Hart. I would call to your attention at least twenty errors, fifteen misleading statements, and ten important omissions in his testimony, many of them pertinent to your task and, together, distorting the entire picture.

Having been publicly dishonored by unfounded statements before your Committee, I ask for the courtesy of an opportunity to come before the Committee, publicly if you are to hold more public hearings, to answer not only for myself but also for the Central Intelligence Agency, which has misrepresented its own performance.

I mention below a few of the points of error and distortion, leaving many others to be discussed in person with the Committee. My comments refer to the line numbers in the draft transcript of Mr. Hart's testimony, and are keyed to the Committee's twofold purpose as you defined it: of evaluating the performance of the Agency and of weighing the credibility of Mr. Nosenko.

For clarity I have subdivided these as follows:

- 1) Effectiveness of CIA's performance:
 - a) in getting the facts about Oswald from Nosenko,
 - b) in investigating these facts.
- 2) Credibility:
 - a) of Mr. Nosenko's statements about Oswald,
 - b) of Mr. Nosenko as a source.

After discussing briefly each of these points, I will make, below, a few general comments on the CIA testimony, and will address myself to the matter of Nosenko's treatment.

CIA's performance in getting the facts from Nosenko

The Committee Staff Report describes accurately the CIA's performance in this particular aspect of its responsibility. Referring to the Agency's questioning of Nosenko on July 3 and July 27, 1964, it says on page 7 that the CIA's questions "were detailed and specific about Nosenko's knowledge of Oswald. The questions were chronological and an attempt was made to touch all aspects of Oswald's stay in the Soviet Union." Moreover, CIA gave Nosenko a transcript of his own remarks so he could add anything more he knew or correct any errors. (Staff Report, pages 8-9)

Mr. Hart's confusing testimony had the effect of changing the Committee's appraisal. Not only giving the Agency a "zero" rating on all aspects of this case, he stated flatly that "There was no effort being made to get at more information he might have." (lines 2848-9) He thus led Mr. Fithian to suggest that the CIA had not even taken "the logical first step" of getting Nosenko's information (3622-8) and led the Chairman to conclude that no investigation of Oswald's activities as known to Nosenko had been made. (4095-8) In this Mr. Hart concurred. (4100)

In fact, CIA got from Nosenko all he had to say about Oswald. CIA's reports contained no less than those of the FBI, who questioned Nosenko as long as they thought they needed to. Your Committee seems to have been satisfied that in its 21 to 24 hours with Nosenko it, too, had got everything he had to say. That added only one new fact, about the KGB's voluminous surveillance reports on Oswald, which contradicted Nosenko's earlier reports and, as the Staff Report notes, in turn contradicted another aspect of Nosenko's story: that the KGB didn't watch Oswald enough to learn of his courtship of Marina.

One wonders, therefore, whether Mr. Hart would give your Committee a similar "dismal" or "zero" rating.

In fact, of course, there was nothing more to be got from Nosenko. If there had been, CIA would have gone doggedly after it, just as the FBI and your Committee would have. Your Staff Report said that Nosenko "recited" the same story in each of his three sessions with the Committee. The word is apt:

