

Department of Justice
Washington, D.C. 20530

May 3, 1976

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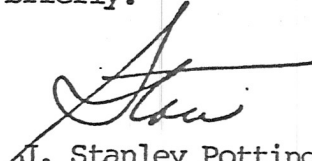
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Subject: Martin Luther King Task
Force - Press Conference

Attached for your information is a transcript of my remarks to the press concerning the Martin Luther King Task Force announcement. In the event you should read this, there are a couple of aspects about it which might be worth discussing briefly.


J. Stanley Pottinger
Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division

Attachment



CIV RTS #6

ATTACHMENT 6

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TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE

HELD BY

J. STANLEY POTTINGER
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

RE: MARTIN LUTHER KING

ON

APRIL 29, 1976

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I don't have a statement for you. The Attorney General has made a statement, which I have before me and which I will read.

Before you waste any footage, let me give you one problem I have. I have an obligation not to discuss the internal memoranda which I have forwarded to the Attorney General, and by that I mean specific recommendations I have made. I do support the Attorney General's disposition as he has made it here. But I am now referring specifically to some reports that were in the press that I had made certain specific recommendations, and I think it is inappropriate for me to go into those to the extent that the Attorney General has not gone into them. I will, however, explain those recommendations or conclusions which are on the face of this document and try to explain the basis for the Attorney General's decision as best I can.

Q. I think it is fair for us to ask you why the Attorney General overruled your recommendation for an outside group to look into this. That's an explanation of his position. I'm asking you to explain why he overruled a recommendation for an outside group to look into the Martin Luther King assassination and to explain further why he decided to put it inside the Department instead of outside the Department?

A. I think that the Attorney General believes that this Department has a very serious responsibility to insure that any alleged wrongdoing, whether its outside or inside, the FBI or the Justice Department, is dealt with by the Attorney General. It is for that reason he has taken a series of steps, including the establishment of the Office of Professional Responsibility in whose jurisdiction it is to look at government wrongdoing. I think that it is appropriate for him to say, as he is saying here, that this Department is strong enough, it is honest enough, and it is responsible enough to insure that wrongdoing within a sister agency can be investigated properly and thoroughly and honestly by attorneys who are accountable to the Attorney General of the United States. That the integrity of the Department is strong enough, and his personal integrity is strong