

#14

- 1 - Mr. J. B. Adams
- 1 - Mr. J. A. Hints
- 1 - Mr. R. J. Gallagher  
(Attn: J. S. Peelman)  
12/22/75

Mr. W. R. Wannall

J. G. Deegan

- 1 - Mr. W. R. Wannall
- 1 - Mr. J. G. Deegan

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MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

This informative memorandum concerns media account of the status of the Department's current project to review FBI files concerning Martin Luther King, Jr. and related matters; and the Department's suggestion it may be necessary for an independent review by other than Department personnel.

The Department's review commenced 12/6/75. Since then, its review has been sporadic and mostly by only two Civil Rights Division officials with a third, Assistant Attorney General Pottinger, assisting to only a minimal extent. My memorandum to you 12/16/75, reported comments of Robert Murphy, Criminal Section Chief, Civil Rights Division, that before Christmas a status report on its review would be given the Attorney General (AG) which would emphasize the enormity of the task given them if all relevant files were to be actually reviewed. Murphy visualized the possibility that the AG might assign a staff of attorneys who would work on the file review for several months.

Attached article from the 12/21/75, "The Washington Post" quotes a Department source as saying that the review is approximately 1/4 completed and so far has produced no evidence that the original FBI investigation of King's slaying was deficient. It reports that the review consists of reading through some 96 volumes of FBI files on King and that it would not be completed until early February, at which time the Civil Rights Division will decide whether to recommend to the AG that an independent examination be established, or the review may determine that no further scrutiny is necessary. Appearing on the "Face the Nation" TV program 12/21/75, the AG similarly reported on the status of the Department's file review, anticipated completion of same, and possibility of a further independent review.

100-106670

Enclosures

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Memorandum to Mr. W. R. Wannall  
Re: Martin Luther King, Jr.  
100-106670

It is obvious that the news account, as well as the AG's comments relate to the principal King security file which is 94 sections in size and which has been about 1/2 reviewed to date. The only other significant file reviewed by the Department has been the file concerning King's close advisor, Stanley David Levison. Most of the file on him, which totals 14 sections, has been reviewed. Significantly, the file on the assassination of King, investigation conducted under the Civil Rights character, is 84 sections in scope and none of it has yet been reviewed by the Department. To give you a better feel for the enormity of the files yet to be reviewed, there is attached a chart setting forth the identities of pertinent files and their size in terms of numbers of sections and numbers of serials. It should also be borne in mind that the Department might also consider looking at field files. The chart also depicts the size of some of the more important files in the field.

It is interesting to note the Department's current thinking as respects a possible further review by an "independent" group. This would, of course, pose some problems for us should it come to pass because of the sensitive nature of some of these files. We need not, for the time being, address ourselves to any such problem.

RECOMMENDATION:

None. For information and record purposes.