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Murder Aftermath

An administration bill to give federal officers authority to arrest and prosecute anyone involved in an assassination is more legislation submitted to Congress to complete lessons of the Kennedy murder.

The proposed legislation is a responsible follow-up of a recommendation by the Warren commission which meticulously investigated President Kennedy's death. The bill would put jurisdiction in such cases where it belongs — on the federal level. It would make it a federal crime to assassinate, kidnap or assault the President or anyone in the immediate line of succession. It would authorize the attorney general to offer a reward up to \$100,000 for a presidential assassin.

This new legislation, or other similar bills, deserves congressional support. An assassination on the national level releases high emotions, attracts reprisals and can prompt serious repercussions.

There is need of assurance that any future case will be properly handled to avoid the kind of conditions which led to Oswald's slaying while in custody of Dallas police. The only shortcoming of the administration's proposal is in listing capital punishment among the penalties for guilt.

Two other legislative proposals, spurred by President Kennedy's death, are for a well defined executive succession procedure and for better control of firearms sales. While the former already has passed the Senate, the latter regrettably is in trouble because of opposition by the powerful gun lobbies.

Certainly both merit a congressional OK. In case of death or disability of a President, who takes over and does what should be spelled out. As for firearms control, which President Johnson wisely pushed in his recent message on crime, the reckless selling of weapons through the mail and by dealers should cease. Too many wrong people, convicted felons and juveniles, are finding it easy to arm themselves for crime.

America learned plenty about security on Nov. 22, 1963. It would be foolish not to put this hard-gotten knowledge in the books through legislation now pending in Washington.

James Fain
Raymond

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

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