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JFK report backs 2-gun theory,

SOURCE says

By EARL GOLZ

The House Assassinations Committee has a report stating "absolutely" that two guns fired at least four shots in Dealey Plaza when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, a committee source said Wednesday.

This would mean — if true — that accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, if he did any shooting, had an accomplice.

The Warren Commission concluded that Oswald, acting alone, assassinated Kennedy from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building with an Italian military rifle. The Warren Commission said Oswald fired three times in less than six seconds, with two of his shots striking the president.

The House committee was told about two weeks ago of the four — and possibly five — shots after an analysis was made on a tape recording of the shooting. The shots were recorded when a Dallas police officer left his shortwave radio transmitter on during the crucial seconds of Nov. 22, 1963, the source said.

Dallas Police Chief Don Byrd, apparently unaware of the 4-shot report, has agreed to make his best sharpshooters available, starting at 5:30 a.m. Aug. 22, when the committee will try to re-create the scene in Dealey Plaza. The plaza will be sealed off for three hours, mainly for acoustical purposes, when the shots are fired from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building.

The committee investigators said they found Byrd "very cooperative" when they approached him about sealing off Dealey Plaza.

"He said, 'I'll do anything; I'll get my own sharpshooters,'" the committee source quoted Byrd as saying. The source also said the Dallas chief added, "If you want us to re-enact it down to the minute and stop the traffic on Friday afternoon and rope it off, then that's how we'll do it."

The report of the four shots was issued by Bolt, Beranek & Newman of Cambridge, Mass., experts in acoustics. The firm also has analyzed the shots fired in the Kent State University shootings and the 18.5-minute gap in President Nixon's White House tapes.

According to the report, the last of the four shots fired in Dallas came only 1.4 seconds after the third shot was heard. Sharpshooters with the FBI had concluded that the shots from the bolt-action Mannlicher Carcano rifle, which Oswald allegedly used to fire at Kennedy, could not be spaced any closer than 2.3 seconds apart.

The report "couldn't be more emphatic on it (the four shots)," the

committee source said. "And, they said, there was some evidence of a fifth shot.

"It (the Aug. 22 test in Dallas) is really just to have the bullets go through the air and tape-record them," the source said. "That's the philosophy — that's what the test does. It doesn't measure the sound, it measures the velocity and vibrations . . .

"We want to do that, together with re-creating the police radio and stuff like that."

The source continued:

"Basically, the final report has been in, and has been double-checked, and everything else. And they have concluded that there were four shots, that they had to come from two separate sources. The shots are way too close.

"The test we are going to do in Dallas is to see if there could somehow be any other explanation for the fourth (shot). But these are the best experts in the world . . . they say they absolutely conclude that their test — what it measures is not the sound, but the

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velocity vibrations — is clear that those are four bullets coming from two separate guns."

The report, however, does not preclude the possibility that a single bullet could have passed first through Kennedy and then struck Texas Gov. John Connally as the Warren Commission concluded, the source said.

In other words, one gunman could have hit Kennedy with two shots, as the Warren Commission stated, without the second gunman making a hit.

Committee spokesmen could not be reached for comment Wednesday night.

It was learned, however, that congressional leaders were secretly briefed by Robert Blakey, chief counsel for the committee, shortly after the Massachusetts firm's report was issued. And three opponents of the Kennedy investigation were "shocked," the committee source said.

The report was a chief reason for the committee's request Monday for

additional funds for the remainder of the year for further investigation into the assassinations of Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the source said.

At the same time, the source noted, "Blakey is warning everyone that it could still fall through somehow. He says the experts don't see any way that it could, but, nonetheless, who knows what will happen? Basically, we tend to believe that (report), and the congressmen have been briefed, House leaders have been briefed, and the Justice Department people have been briefed on it."

The Warren Commission based much of its conclusion that only three shots were fired on the fact that three spent cartridges from the Italian rifle were found near the window on the sixth floor of the building from where Oswald allegedly shot Kennedy.

The commission heard testimony from witnesses who testified that three to six shots were heard in Dealey Plaza, but noted that the buildings and other

contours in the area made it probable that any shots over three were merely echoes.

From the moment of Kennedy's death, there has been controversy over whether he was killed by a lone assassin or whether he was the victim of a conspiracy involving more than one marksman. Oswald was arrested and charged with the president's murder and with the death of a Dallas police officer shortly after the shooting.

Oswald was killed two days later by Jack Ruby in the Dallas police headquarters.

Congressional sources said although the existence of the policemen's tape may have been known to the Warren Commission, the types of acoustical tests now possible were unavailable in 1964.

The House committee began a search for the tape almost a year ago. The Cambridge firm conducted its test earlier this year and, two weeks ago, the committee received the report that

there was a sound that could have been a fourth gunshot

As the Assassinations Committee sought additional funds to continue its investigation through the end of the year, it met a skeptical reception by some members of the Administration Committee. Skepticism increased when the assassination committee was accused of improper investigative techniques.

Critics of the Warren Commission report steadfastly have maintained more than three shots were fired at Kennedy, and that more than one bullet struck the president and Connally, then governor of Texas, who was wounded while sitting in the front seat of the limousine in which Kennedy was riding.

If the Assassination Committee determined conclusively four shots were fired at the presidential motorcade, it would produce the first dispute of the Warren Commission's findings and perhaps bring other aspects of the report into question.