

JFK-King Probe Panel Dispute Climax Delayed

2/17/77
Pgh. Press

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Rep. Henry Gonzalez, D-Tex., doggedly holds on to the chairmanship of the House Assassination Committee despite a crushing vote delaying his confrontation with the committee over the firing of Chief Counsel Richard Sprague.

The committee was established to investigate the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., but the internal dispute has eclipsed other activities.

Gonzalez fired Sprague last week on grounds Sprague overstepped his authority, undermined the chairman was a "prima donna."

"When I see a rattlesnake on the doorstep," Gonzalez said, "I don't hesitate. I stomp on it and answer questions later."

The 11 other members of the committee overruled Gonzalez and told Sprague to stay put. Gonzalez named Kenneth Brooten, a committee lawyer, as "acting" chief counsel.

Yesterday was supposed to be the day of decision to see who would come out of the session in charge, but the meeting was postponed until next Monday.