

WEATHER

Rain, snow
1-2 inches, 30s.
Tonight: Rain
and snow, 20s.

Tomorrow:
Cloudy, windy, 30s.

Saturday:
Cloudy, cold

SUNSET: 5:14
SUNRISE TOMORROW: 7:03

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'NEW EVIDENCE' IN JFK KILLING

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WASHINGTON — The chairman of the House Assassinations Committee says his investigators have uncovered "fresh" evidence which "clearly indicates" a conspiracy in the murder of President Kennedy.

Rep. Henry Gonzalez (D-Texas) also said new evidence shows James Earl Ray, the convicted killer of Martin Luther King Jr., had help.

Disclosure of the evidence in both cases, Gonzalez said, could jeopardize the lives of as many as four witnesses.

He said the evidence had not been "completely corroborated and cross-checked."

But it was the boldest statement yet from any member of the panel that Ray and Lee Harvey Oswald had not acted alone.

Gonzalez, speaking last night after the House gave his controversial panel 60 more days to justify its existence, said the new evidence had been obtained in recent weeks from witnesses and documents.

"In the [1963] Kennedy assassination," Gonzalez said, "one of the fundamental premises of the Warren Commission—that [Oswald] acted alone—would have to be knocked out if this particular evidence is verified and corroborated."

He declined to elaborate in detail, saying:

"It would be indiscreet and possibly jeopardize the lives of at least two witnesses — and possibly four—or would jeopardize the thoroughgoing corroboration by the staff working on both assassinations."

He said verification of the JFK evidence "entails photo-spectrum analysis and further traveling on the part of the [committee] staff."

In the King case, Gonzalez said the fleeing

Ray's "ability to enlist the aid of at least four persons in one Canadian city and certain facts regarding his trip to London [where he was apprehended] and to Portugal clearly indicated, even on a threshold basis, that he was not alone in his venture."

His statement followed yesterday's report that a team of Justice Dept. lawyers had concluded after a 10-month investigation

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that Ray was solely responsible for King's assassination.

Gonzalez said he found the timing of the Justice Dept. leak — on the day of the House vote—"strange."

Ray was arrested two months after King was cut down by a high-powered rifle bullet in Memphis.

The FBI said Ray had traveled to Toronto, Montreal, London, and Portugal during his flight, but the agency was never able to explain how he had obtained the forged passports, documentation and travel expenses that he needed.

Ray pleaded guilty on March 10, 1969 in Tennessee,

but later insisted he had done so only because his lawyer had pressured him against his will.

He has been unsuccessful in his efforts to have his 99-year prison sentence overturned.

Gonzalez, in a relaxed mood after his 237-164 victory on the House floor, said his committee will not be able to do much "heavy investigative work" during the 60 days.

The jowly, pug-nosed Congressman has long been a skeptic of the official investigations of both assassinations.

Last year, when he first proposed the creation of a special assassination panel, he said he was convinced

that Kennedy was the victim of a murder conspiracy.

Last night's House resolution provided for a funding level of \$84,000 a month, a figure that will permit investigators to continue studying the voluminous evidence gathered by previous investigations, but which will not pay for the travel and long-distance phone calls needed to probe unexplored questions.

Asked whether he will retain his controversial chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague, Gonzalez responded with a somewhat chilly endorsement.

"If he is willing to work under the rules and limitations of funding, why fine

and well," Gonzalez said.

But he noted that the committee intends to review some of the published criticism of Sprague and his conduct as a prosecutor in Philadelphia.

"We are assessing his serviceability," Gonzalez said.

The floor debate suggested that the House was not showing the same enthusiasm for the assassination inquiry that was demonstrated when the committee was created last September in a 280-65 vote.

"It is in reality a 60-day reprieve and not a commutation of sentence," Rep. John B. Anderson (R-Ill.), a member of the committee, concurred.