

Assassination prober claims new evidence

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the House Assassinations Committee, given two months to prove his panel should stay in business, says he has new evidence that indicates the killers of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. did not act alone.

After the House voted Wednesday night to continue the panel through March 31, Rep. Henry Gonzalez, D-Tex., told reporters that he has new, uncorroborated evidence of conspiracies in each assassination.

"We have threshold evidence, not yet completely corroborated and cross-checked, that indicates the strong possibility that James Earl Ray did not act alone" in the King slaying and that Lee Harvey Oswald was not alone in killing Kennedy, said Gonzalez.

The assassinations panel was established last September, but a controversy developed over its request for a budget of \$6.5 million a year and its chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague. The two-month extension was a compromise, and Gonzalez will have to work with \$84,000 a month.

Gonzalez said the new evidence had developed since the committee issued its preliminary report in December. He declined to elaborate, saying it might jeopardize the investigation, and he stressed that the leads still have to be checked out closely.

His remarks conflicted directly with a Justice Department report leaked earlier Wednesday that concluded Ray alone killed King.

After a 10-month investigation, a team of Justice Department lawyers rejected theories that Ray was only a cog in a conspiracy to assassinate the civil rights leader.