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The King Review

Attorney General Edward Levi acted with forthrightness in directing two senior officers of the Department of Justice to review the investigation of the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to determine whether a reopening of the case was in order.

Even before the Senate's Select Committee on Intelligence had uncovered the F.B.I.'s six-year campaign to destroy Dr. King's effectiveness, black leaders and other Americans of both races were raising sharp and troubling questions about the case. For example, the intercontinental flight of James Earl Ray, Dr. King's convicted murderer, seemed extraordinarily sophisticated for such an ordinary man, and his legal defense seemed bizarre and often strangely inept.

The committee's revelations, particularly the strong indication that the F.B.I. had attempted to suggest suicide to the civil rights leader, add grotesque dimensions to the doubts. The very least one can wonder, considering the late F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover's feelings about Dr. King, is whether he could have put his agency's whole heart into the investigation of the assassination. Given the weight of all the doubts, Mr. Levi's two associates have a very heavy burden in the continuing Federal effort to revive the people's faith in the processes of justice.