

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. DeLoach

DATE: 3/13/69

FROM : T. E. Bishop

SUBJECT: JAMES EARL RAY
INQUIRY FROM SENATOR JAMES O. EASTLAND

Tolson	_____
DeLoach	_____
Mohr	_____
Bishop	_____
Casper	_____
Callahan	_____
Conrad	_____
Felt	_____
Gale	_____
Rosen	_____
Sullivan	_____
Tavel	_____
Trotter	_____
Tele. Room	_____
Holmes	_____
Gandy	_____

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On the evening of 3/12/69 Jay Sourwine, Chief Counsel for the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, telephoned Bishop and advised that Senator Eastland had asked him to contact the FBI and request that he be furnished answers to the questions raised in his press release of 3/12/69. Bishop advised Sourwine that he had not seen a copy of this press release and therefore was not aware of the questions raised in it. Sourwine explained that in the release Eastland stated that he is assembling all available facts concerning the slaying of Martin Luther King in an effort to answer some questions in his mind and in his press release he has listed the principal questions to which he refers. Sourwine advised that he would send Bishop a copy of the press release in question on 3/13/69. A copy of it has been received and is attached.

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OBSERVATION

While the questions raised by Senator Eastland undoubtedly can be very simply answered by material contained in the Bureau file on this case, it is felt that we should advise Eastland that all data on the case has been furnished to the Department of Justice and that he might wish to contact the Attorney General for the answers to his questions.

RECOMMENDATION

That Bishop be authorized to inform Sourwine that the FBI cannot furnish the information desired, but that Senator Eastland might want to contact the Attorney General regarding this matter.

Enclosure

- 1 - Mr. DeLoach (Enclosure)
- 1 - Mr. Rosen (Enclosure)
- 1 - Mr. Sullivan (Enclosure)
- 1 - Mr. Jones (Enclosure)

TEB:mls

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NEWS FROM SENATOR JAMES O. EASTLAND

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FURTHER INFORMATION: LARRY SPEAKES (202-225-1)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON -- Senator James O. Eastland (D. Miss) said Wednesday he is "assembling all available facts" in the slaying of Martin Luther King "in an effort to answer some questions in my mind."

Senator Eastland, who heads the Internal Security Subcommittee, said he is looking into the matter as head of the Senate's anti-communist watchdog committee. "There are some questions which are unanswered," the Senator said. "They deserve an answer."

He pointed out that Ray's own statements had indicated there was a conspiracy with a "blond Latin" man, who directed Ray and provided him with funds. "The obvious question is - were there communists involved?" the Senator said. "There has been and there are now some questions in my mind on this incident" he added. "I have doubts that this killing was the work of one man."

The Senator said he wanted to find out --

- how Ray knew that King was going to be in the Lorraine Motel...
- how Ray knew the location of King's room. . .
- how Ray knew King would come out on the balcony where he was shot. . .
- how did Ray know exactly where to go to get a room from which to fire the shot...

"It is obvious to me," said the Senator, "that someone inside the motel advised Ray. "The mathematical odds that King would step from a certain room onto a balcony directly in front of a would-be assassin are impossible to calculate," the Senator said. "Only a man armed with detailed and accurate information could have positioned himself to fire the fatal shot." He said also it was a puzzle as to "who assisted and advised Ray in the intricacies of international travel."

Furthermore, he added, some of the leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which King headed, have said Ray is not guilty.

The Senator emphasized that he had "no direct information" on any individual.

"I simply am raising some questions that are in my mind," he said.