

Justice Dept. Planning Limited Investigation Into Kennedy Slaying

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5 (AP) — The Justice Department, more than a year after being urged by a House committee to open its own investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy, has decided that it will conduct a limited inquiry into the matter.

Justice Department officials say the inquiry will focus primarily on controversial acoustical evidence that a second

person fired at Kennedy in Dallas's Dealey Plaza on Nov. 22, 1963.

The department was urged in December 1978 by the House assassinations committee to follow up on the panel's findings of possible conspiracies in the slayings of both Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights leader.

The committee concluded after a two-year investigation that Kennedy's death probably resulted from a conspiracy, possibly by organized crime figures, and that Dr. King's murder in Memphis on April 4, 1968, might have been a result of a conspiracy.

The decision to conduct the Justice Department inquiry was announced in a letter written by Robert L. Keuch, special

counsel to Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti.

Mr. Keuch told Representative Louis Stokes, Democrat of Ohio, who is chairman of the House assassinations panel, that he had asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conduct a "limited investigation into several aspects of the assassination."

Independent Review

He said the National Science Foundation would be asked to help arrange an "independent scientific review" of the findings of the House committee's acoustical experts. Those experts concluded that a Dallas police tape made during the Kennedy slaying showed that a second

person fired a shot from a grassy knoll along the Presidential motorcade route.

Mr. Keuch did not explain what other aspects of the assassination would be explored, but Robert Havel, a Justice Department spokesman, said yesterday that the acoustical evidence was the primary matter the department would investigate.

The committee had also asked the department to sponsor a scientific examination of a film of the Dealey Plaza area that some people have said showed evidence of two persons at the windows of the Texas Schoolbook Depository Building, the supposed perch of Lee Harvey Oswald, the assassin. Mr. Havel said officials were seeking to obtain the film.

Mr. Stokes said he was gratified by the department's decision. He said Mr. Keuch had also assured him that department officials would undertake an investigation into Dr. King's murder. Mr. Havel said, however, that no inquiry into the matter was planned until lawyers finished a review of the House committee's reports.