

House panel cites lead in King killing

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A report by the House Committee on Assassinations says its investigators have obtained uncorroborated testimony that James Earl Ray received instructions from a secret conspirator during

his flight after the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.), chairman of the subcommittee probing King's slaying, said the information came from "a very reliable source" who talked

with Ray, now serving a 99-year prison term.

Fauntroy said in a telephone interview yesterday the witness told the investigators "there was someone with whom he (Ray) was to get in touch in Portugal."

The testimony is cited in a 20-page report approved by the full 12-member committee as one of two examples of leads the panel feels must be pursued in its investigation into the assassinations of King and President John F. Kennedy, Fauntroy said.

The other example is the previously reported recollection of former CIA employees regarding the agency's surveillance of Lee Harvey Oswald in Mexico City less than two months before the Kennedy assassination.

The report, not yet publicly released, will be presented to the full House in January as justification for the committee's proposed one-year, \$6.5-million budget.

Speaking of the new lead in the King case, Fauntroy told a reporter, "You've gone to the heart of the matter: Have we corroborated this, and we have not." But

he insisted, "The source is of such reliability we feel confident the lead is worth following."

Fauntroy said the report identifies the source as "a witness who had never previously been interviewed by any investigative agency." Fauntroy said the source was an American who was neither a relative nor an attorney for Ray, but he refused to give any further information.

James Lesar, who has represented Ray since 1970, said the only other persons with whom Ray has talked have been reporters and prison guards. Lesar added that Ray never told him about a secret meeting in Portugal.

The report described the lead as follows: "Ray contacted another person from whom he received further instructions . . . out of the United States."

Fauntroy confirmed that the location was Portugal but said investigators did not know the identity of the other person nor whether the meeting actually took place.