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House of Representatives

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSES OF INVESTIGATIONS INTO ASSASSINATIONS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

(Mr. STOKES asked and was given permission to extend his remarks at this point in the RECORD and to include extraneous matter.)

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, the Select Committee on Assassinations has received numerous requests from constituents for information on the work and progress of the committee. As you know, under the rules adopted by this committee, the members and staff are not permitted to discuss the substance or procedure of the investigation with persons outside the committee.

Nonetheless, we are aware of the public's interest and want to be as responsive as possible under the circumstances. With this in mind, I am inserting in the RECORD two issue briefs, prepared by the Congressional Research Service in the Library of Congress, which deal with background and analyses of investigations into the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., including chronology of events, legislation, hearings, congressional documents, and additional reference sources.

I am hopeful that this will provide some insight into the task that has been undertaken by the select committee.

The material follows:

ASSASSINATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY: THE CONSPIRACY CONTROVERSY

ISSUE BRIEF NO. IB77054

(Author: Cavanagh, Suzanne, Government Division, the Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Major Issues System)

(Date originated May 4, 1977.)

(Date updated November 3, 1977.)

ISSUE DEFINITION

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas. The Warren Commission issued its report on Sept. 24, 1964. The Commission found that: (1) the shots that killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired from the sixth floor window at the southeast corner of the Texas School Book Depository; (2) that the weight of evidence indicated that three shots were fired; (3) that the shots which killed President Kennedy and wounded Governor Connally were fired by Lee Harvey Oswald; and (4) that there was no evidence that either Lee Harvey Oswald or his assassin, Jack Ruby, was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign, to assassinate President Kennedy.

Since that time there has been controversy about the findings of the Warren Commission. Several major issues are: did Lee Harvey Oswald really kill President Kennedy; if so, did he act alone; was there a conspiracy to assassinate the President; and, if there was a conspiracy, was any foreign Government or any agency of the United States Government involved?

BACKGROUND AND POLICY ANALYSIS

President John F. Kennedy was assassinated on Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas. The alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was charged with the murder of President Kennedy on the following day, Nov. 23, 1963. On Sunday, Nov. 24, as Oswald was being transferred from the city jail to the Dallas County jail, he was shot and killed. Jack Ruby, a local nightclub owner, was indicted and convicted of murdering Oswald, and was sentenced to death. Ruby's conviction was overturned on appeal, and while he was awaiting a new trial, he died of a blood clot in his lungs in Dallas, Texas, on Jan. 3, 1967.

On Nov. 29, 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson issued Executive Order 11130, creating a Commission to investigate the as-

sassination of President Kennedy. Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the United States, was appointed chairman of the Commission, and the members included two United States Senators (Richard Russell and John Sherman Cooper), two members of the House of Representatives (Hale Boggs and Gerald Ford), a former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (Allen Dulles), and a former U.S. High Commissioner for Germany and former President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (John McCloy). The Commission reported its finding to the President on Sept. 24, 1964. Its investigation was conducted over a 10-month period by a staff of 83 who interviewed several hundred witnesses. The Commission concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald did kill President Kennedy, and that he acted alone in doing so.

From the time the Warren Commission Report was made public to the present, the Commission has been criticized for its methods, comprehensiveness, and findings. There have been many allegations against the conclusions of the Warren Commission, and the critics are not in unity with respect to alternative theories to the findings of the Commission. Criticisms frequently made are:

(1) The Warren Commission sought to dispel rumors of a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy—thus its function was more political than investigative. It assumed that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin and set out to prove that assumption by giving undue weight to any evidence that would be used to support the theory that Oswald acted alone.

(2) The Commission concluded that three shots were fired and that one of those bullets fatally wounded President Kennedy and that the same bullet that exited through President Kennedy's throat wounded Governor Connally. Critics argue that at least four bullets were fired, and that the "single bullet" theory is incorrect.

(3) The Warren Commission concluded that all of the bullets came from behind. Critics allege that some of the bullets came from the front, and that the wound in President Kennedy's throat was an entrance, not an exit wound. Some critics question whether President Kennedy's body arrived at the Bethesda Hospital in the same condition as it left Dallas, saying that the wound in President Kennedy's throat may have been altered to appear like an exit wound. Some of the descriptions of the wound by doctors at Parkland Memorial Hospital who first treated the President were ignored or discounted by the Warren Commission.

(4) The Warren Commission discounted 52 witnesses who insisted that some of the shots that President Kennedy came from in front of him, from the direction of the grassy knoll.

(5) Critics argue that the fatal shot came from the right and to the front and could only have been fired from the grassy knoll. In addition, the film taken by Abraham Zapruder showed President Kennedy's body moved backward after the bullet impact. The film, some argue, indicates that four bullets were shot—one from the Texas Book Depository, hitting the President in the back; the second from the County Records Building, hitting Governor Connally; the third from the rear, hitting President Kennedy in the back of the head; and the fourth from the front, hitting the President in the head. An investigation conducted by CBS television in 1975 concluded, on the basis of a study of x-rays and photographs taken at the autopsy, that only two bullets hit President Kennedy and that neither struck the President from the front.

(6) The Warren Commission ignored an FBI Summary Report which stated that President Kennedy and Governor Connally were wounded by separate bullets. The FBI Summary Report also placed President Kennedy's wounds 6 inches below the neck and in the head. The Warren Commission placed one wound at the base of President Kennedy's neck, contradicting the FBI Summary Report.

(7) There have been allegations that Lee Harvey Oswald had some connections with the FBI or CIA. On May 14, 1964, J. Edgar Hoover testified before the Commission that

Oswald had no connections with the FBI. The Warren Commission did not pursue that allegation beyond Hoover's testimony. Allegations that Oswald was involved with the CIA were rejected by the Commission, with, according to some critics, a less than thorough investigation.

(8) Another concern of those who reject the "lone assassin" theory is that the Warren Commission did not give sufficient attention to the autopsy report. Critics point out that an examination of the wounds in President Kennedy's brain could resolve the question of whether or not the President was shot from the front as well as from behind. Physical evidence, including President Kennedy's brain and tissue slides from the bullet wounds, had been collected by the Warren Commission and were placed in the National Archives as a result of an agreement between the Kennedy family and the National Archives. However, in the Appendix to a Hearing before the Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights of the House Committee on Government Operations, an article written by Fred P. Graham for the New York Times stated that the preserved brain of President Kennedy, plus microscopic slides of tissues removed from the bullet wounds, are missing from the National Archives. Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, a medical expert and critic of the Warren Commission Report, examined the autopsy items at the National Archives and after his examination asserted that these objects were not among the autopsy items.

(9) Critics of the sole assassin conclusion of the Warren Commission also point out that 17 witnesses connected to the assassination of President Kennedy were found dead within 3 years after the assassination. Actuarial odds against this happening are allegedly one hundred trillion to one.

(10) Finally, there have been various allegations of a Cuban connection with Lee Harvey Oswald—either governmental or non-governmental. In the Final Report of the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Church Committee) dated April 23, 1976, the committee stated that the CIA was involved in plots to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro and that this activity dated back to 1960. There have also been allegations that Oswald was involved with anti-Castro Cubans who were seeking revenge against President Kennedy for his role in the aborted Bay of Pigs invasion.

Critics have called for a new investigation into the assassination of President Kennedy. A Gallup Poll dated February 1977 revealed that 81 percent of those surveyed believed that more than one person was involved in the assassination of President Kennedy, 11 percent believed one man was responsible, and 8 percent expressed no opinion.

One congressional response to demands for a new investigation was the creation of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, presently chaired by Mr. Stokes (D. Ohio). This committee, according to H. Res. 433, will exist for the duration of the 95th Congress (see chronology for the itemization of key events concerning creation and operations of this Committee). The Committee is authorized to investigate both the assassinations of President Kennedy and of Martin Luther King, Jr. [see IB77057, The Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Conspiracy Controversy] and to report its findings to the House.

LEGISLATION 95th Congress

H. Res. 465 (Dent). Provided for the funding of the Select Committee on Assassinations at \$2.5 million for one year. Adopted by the House on Apr. 28, 1977.

H. Res. 433 (Stokes et al.). Provided for the extension of the Select Committee on Assassinations for the duration of the 95th Congress. Adopted by the House on Mar. 30, 1977.

H. Res. 222 (Bolling). Amended H. Res. 9 and provided for the creation of a Select Committee on Assassinations which would expire on Mar. 31, 1977. Reported favorably from the Committee on Rules on Feb. 1, 1977, and adopted by the House on Feb. 2, 1977.

H. Res. 9 (Wright). Provided for the reestablishment of the Select Committee on Assassinations and provided for interim funding under the provisions of H. Res. 11. Introduced on Jan. 4, 1977, and referred to the Committee on Rules.

94th Congress

H. Res. 1540 (Gonzalez et al.). Provided for a select committee to be composed of 12 members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House for the purpose of conducting a full and complete investigation and study of the circumstances surrounding the death of John F. Kennedy and the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., and of others the select committee shall determine. Introduced on Sept. 14, 1976, and referred to the Committee on Rules. Reported favorably to the House from the Committee on Rules on Sept. 17, 1976. Adopted Sept. 17, 1976.

HEARINGS

U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Government Operations. Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights. National Archives—Security classification problems involving Warren Commission files and other records. Hearings, 94th Congress, 1st session. Nov. 11, 1975. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1975. 98 p.

U.S. Congress. House. Select Committee on Assassinations. Committee meetings. Hearings, 95th Congress, 1st session. Mar. 9, 11, 16, and 23, 1977. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 59 p.

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U.S. Congress. House. Select Committee on Assassinations. Committee rules of the House Select Committee on Assassinations; report. Mar. 18, 1977. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 11 p.

At head of title: 95th Congress, 1st session. Committee Print.

—Report. Mar. 28, 1977. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 13 p.

At head of title: 95th Congress, 1st session. Committee Print.

—Report providing for the expenses of investigations and studies to be conducted by the Select Committee on Assassinations. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 11 p. (95 Congress, 1st session. House. Report No. 95-223)

—Report together with additional and supplemental views. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 18 p. (94th Congress, 2d Session. House. Report No. 94-1781)

U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. Alleged assassination plots involving foreign leaders; an interim report. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1975. 349 p. (94th Congress, 1st session. Senate. Report No. 94-465)

—The investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy: performance of the intelligence agencies. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1976. 106 p. (94th Congress, 2d session. Senate. Report No. 94-755)

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

June 20, 1977—G. Robert Blakey named chief counsel to House Select Committee on Assassinations.

June 7, 1977—Reputed anti-Castro activist Loren Hall appeared, under subpoena, before a subcommittee of the House Select Committee on Assassinations and refused to answer any questions relating to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

April 28, 1977—House of Representative approved a budget of \$2.5 million for one year for the Select Committee on Assassinations.

April 11, 1977—Alvin B. Lewis Jr. (now resigned) named acting chief counsel and staff director of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. Lewis had been a special counsel for the committee since Dec. 6, 1976.

April 1, 1977—William Oltmans, Dutch journalist and alleged friend of George de Mohrenschildt, testified before House Select Committee on Assassinations in a closed door session.

March 30, 1977—House Select Committee on Assassinations extended for the life of the 95th Congress.

Richard Sprague resigned as chief counsel for the Select Committee on Assassinations.

March 29, 1977—George de Mohrenschildt, Russian born professor, who allegedly knew Lee Harvey Oswald, and who was to be interviewed by the Select Committee on Assassinations, committed suicide in Florida.

March 16, 1977—Reputed organized crime leader Santo Trafficante Jr. appeared, under subpoena, before the House Select Committee on Assassinations and refused to answer any questions relating to the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

March 8, 1977—Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez's resignation as Chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations accepted by the House. Congressman Louis Stokes named new Chairman.

February 10, 1977—Chairman Gonzalez fired chief counsel Richard Sprague from position on the Select Committee on Assassinations. Sprague refused to leave his post. Eleven members of the Committee signed a letter to Sprague endorsing him and stating that the Chairman's action was "invalid in law . . ."

February 2, 1977—H. Res. 222, which provided for the creation of a Select Committee on Assassinations that would expire Mar.

31, 1977, was adopted by the House. Budget of \$84,000 per month for the two month duration endorsed by the House. Speaker appointed twelve members of the House to the Committee with Mr. Gonzalez as Chairman.

January 3, 1977—The Select Committee on Assassinations officially expired at the end of the 94th Congress.

December 12, 1976—Chief Counsel Richard Sprague went before the Select Committee on Assassinations with a budget proposal of \$6.5 million for the first year. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the budget to the full House in the 95th Congress.

November 15, 1976—The Select Committee on Assassinations confirmed Richard Sprague, former Assistant District Attorney in Philadelphia, as chief counsel for the Committee.

September 30, 1976—The House of Representatives endorsed a preliminary budget of \$150,000 for the Select Committee on Assassinations.

September 17, 1976—The House of Representatives adopted H. Res. 1540, which provided for the establishment of a select committee to be composed of 12 members appointed by the Speaker for the purpose of conducting a full and complete investigation and study of the circumstances surrounding the death of John F. Kennedy and the death of Martin Luther King and of others the select committee shall determine. Mr. Downing appointed Chairman of the Select Committee on Assassinations.

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ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: THE CONSPIRACY CONTROVERSY ISSUE BRIEF NUMBER IB77057

(Author: Cavanagh, Suzanne, Government Division, the Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Major Issues System)

(Date originated: May 4, 1977.)

(Date updated: November 3, 1977.)

ISSUE DEFINITION

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated on Apr. 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee. The indicated assassin, James Earl Ray, eventually pled guilty to the murder of Dr. King and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. Subsequently, Ray stated that he did not murder Dr. King, and that he was the unknown victim of a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King. He has attempted, so far without success, to change his guilty plea and secure a new trial. A Federal District Court in Memphis found no violation of Ray's constitutional rights resulting from his guilty plea and the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously upheld that ruling, saying that Ray's testimony at his hearing on Mar. 10, 1969, made it clear that he understood his actions in pleading guilty. Key questions about the assassination of Dr. King are still raised by many. These include: did James Earl Ray assassinate Martin Luther King, Jr.? If so why, and did he do it alone, or was he involved in a conspiracy? If Ray did not kill Dr. King, who did? If there was a conspiracy, was any Federal, State, or local governmental authority involved?

BACKGROUND AND POLICY ANALYSIS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was struck by a sniper's bullet at 6:01 p.m. while standing on the balcony of his room in the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, on Apr. 4, 1968. He was pronounced dead at 7:05 p.m. Within one half hour after the shooting the Memphis Field Office of the FBI was ordered to conduct a full investigation of the murder as a possible violation of the civil rights conspiracy statute (18 U.S.C. 241).

Eyewitnesses described a man seen fleeing from a rooming house near the Lorraine Motel as a white male, between 26 and 30 years old, about 6 feet tall, and weighing approximately 160 pounds. Some eyewitnesses reported that a man fitting that description dropped a bundle in front of a store close to

the rooming house, got into a white car, possibly a Mustang, and sped away at a high speed. The contents of the bundle were turned over to the FBI and were sent to Washington, D.C. on the night of Apr. 4, 1968.

On Apr. 7, 1968, all FBI Field Offices were directed to participate in the investigation of Dr. King's assassination. The rifle found in Memphis was traced to the seller, the Aeromarine Supply Company in Birmingham, Alabama. On Apr. 11, 1968, an abandoned white Mustang was found in Atlanta, Georgia. A license check of the vehicle revealed that it was registered to an Eric Starvo Galt, and on Apr. 17, the FBI issued a fugitive warrant for the arrest of Galt. Two days later, a check of latent fingerprints found on the rifle and binoculars positively identified the fingerprints to be those of an escapee from the Missouri State Penitentiary, James Earl Ray. The FBI determined "that Eric Starvo Galt was James Earl Ray." On June 8, 1968, the man identified as James Earl Ray was arrested by British authorities at Heathrow Airport outside of London.

While awaiting extradition in London, Ray wrote to Arthur Hanes, Sr., former mayor of Birmingham, asking Hanes to represent him at his trial. Mr. Hanes and his associate, Arthur Hanes, Jr., agreed to take Ray's case.

On Nov. 10, 1968, Arthur Hanes, Sr. and his son went to the Shelby County Jail in Memphis to see their client. Upon arrival Hanes, Sr. was told that the Sheriff wished to see him. Hanes was shown a xeroxed copy of a handwritten note from James Earl Ray in which Ray stated that he was changing lawyers. Hanes was replaced by Percy Foreman, and the trial was rescheduled for Mar. 10, 1969. Foreman reportedly advised Ray to plead guilty and receive a prison sentence rather than to risk being sentenced to death if convicted by a jury. On Mar. 10, 1969, James Earl Ray pled guilty to the charge of murdering Dr. King and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. Since that time Ray has repeatedly denied shooting Dr. King and has sought a new trial. All of Ray's petitions for a new trial and a plea change have been denied.

In the 8 years following James Earl Ray's conviction and denial of guilt several theories have been advanced by those who either doubt Ray's guilt or his lone guilt. The critics of the court finding are not in agreement as to alternative explanations of the murder, and appeals for a reopening of the case have been denied by both a Federal District Court in Memphis and the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, both finding no unconstitutional violation of Ray's rights resulting from his guilty plea. A Justice Department report dated Jan. 11, 1977, concluded that James Earl Ray acted alone in assassinating Dr. King.

Theory A: Ray was knowingly involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King.

Those who believe that Ray was knowingly involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King, or at least had help in doing so, question how Ray could have obtained a passport, false identification, and four credible aliases without help. These critics of the "loner" theory point out that Ray had a previous record of mistakes and miscalculations in his criminal attempts. For example, in Ray's first known burglary of a Los Angeles cafeteria, he dropped his army discharge notice and his savings account passbook. In a chase after robbing a Chicago cab driver, Ray fell through the basement window of a house. In East Alton, Illinois, Ray returned for more loot after robbing a dry cleaner and was surprised by police who had noticed a window ajar. In two grocery store holdups, Ray and his accomplices took around \$2,000 from cash registers and missed \$30,000 in locked safes.

Supporters of the "knowingly-involved-conspiracy" theory say that Ray obtained money from an unknown source during the year following his escape from the Missouri State Penitentiary. Ray, according to an FBI report, spent approximately \$7,900 between Apr. 23, 1967, when he escaped from prison, and June 8, 1968, when he was apprehended in Heathrow Airport. Ray's documented income from that period was \$664.34. During that period Ray traveled both in the U.S. and abroad, making trips to Acapulco, Montreal, London, and Lisbon.

Ray contends that a person named "Raoul," whom he met in a bar in Montreal, financed many of his trips and purchases in exchange for Ray's smuggling items across the Canadian border into the United States. "Raoul" has never been identified, and the source of Ray's additional income has not been otherwise determined. Ray insists that "Raoul" instructed him to purchase a rifle and gave him the money to do so. Some say that "Raoul" is Jerry Ray, James Earl Ray's brother, and that Jerry Ray planned the assassination of Dr. King.

These critics of the investigation point out that Ray alleges that he drove to Atlanta by himself after the assassination. However, when authorities in Atlanta discovered the abandoned white Mustang, cigarette and cigar ashes were littering the floor of the car. Ray does not and did not smoke.

Theory B: Ray is innocent or was the unwitting actor in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. King.

Some who doubt that James Earl Ray killed Dr. King contend that the Govern-

ment has failed to produce a single reliable eyewitness who could place Ray at the scene of the crime and that the police artist's sketch of the alleged assassin did not resemble James Earl Ray. In addition, no expert testimony was given either to establish that the bullet taken from Dr. King's body did or did not come from the rifle allegedly belonging to Ray. Nor could a connection be established between James Earl Ray and the bullet that killed Dr. King. The critics of the Ray conviction allege that not a single fingerprint of Ray's has been positively identified from his alleged getaway car, or in the rooming house where he allegedly shot Dr. King.

Those who support the theory that James Earl Ray was an unwitting actor in a conspiracy question why Ray would have dropped the bundle containing the rifle with his fingerprints on it after assassinating Dr. King.

Ray continues to protest his conviction, saying that his second lawyer, Percy Foreman, did not give him the best defense possible, and did not conduct an adequate investigation. Foreman allegedly was to receive a 60% share of the royalties from Ray's biography, *He Slew the Dreamer*, eventually written by William Bradford Huie. Huie paid for Ray's defense in return for exclusive rights to Ray's story. Ray claims he was browbeaten and misled into pleading guilty.

Theory C: "Official" conspiracy to assassinate Martin Luther King, Jr.

Because of a perceived FBI mishandling of its King assassination investigation and the reputed hatred of the late Director J. Edgar Hoover for Dr. King, some critics have asked whether the FBI was in any way involved in a conspiracy to assassinate King. Some of these critics even allege that the FBI may have helped to plan the murder of Dr. King. In support of their claims, the "official" conspiracy critics point out that in testifying before the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, former Assistant Director of the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Division, William C. Sullivan, acknowledged harassing Dr. King and taping his telephone on orders from J. Edgar Hoover. They also note that the FBI intelligence squad to which Hoover assigned the task of destroying Dr. King's reputation was then assigned primary responsibility by Hoover to investigate King's death.

These critics are also concerned with the time lag between the FBI's taking custody of the rifle containing Ray's fingerprints and the identification of the fingerprints as those of James Earl Ray. The FBI took the rifle that allegedly contained Ray's fingerprints to Washington the night of Apr. 4, 1968, the night of the assassination. Thirteen days later the FBI issued a fugitive warrant for "Eric Starvo Galt," not James Earl Ray, although Ray had a prison record.

Finally, these critics ask why one of the two Memphis police officers in charge of security for Dr. King was taken off that assignment two hours before Dr. King was killed.

Where are we now?

Critics have called for a new investigation into the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. A Gallup poll dated February 1977 revealed that 69% of those surveyed believed that more than one person was involved in the assassination of Dr. King.

One congressional response to demands for a new investigation has been the creation of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, presently chaired by Representative Stokes (D. Ohio). It will exist for the duration of the 95th Congress and is authorized to investigate both the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and President John F. Kennedy [see IB77054, Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: The Conspiracy Controversy], and to report its findings to the House. (See chronology for itemization of key events concerning the creation and operations of this Committee). So far it has been funded \$2.5 million to conduct its study.

As previously stated, a Justice Department report dated Jan. 11, 1977, and made public on Feb. 2, 1977, concluded that James Earl Ray acted alone in assassinating Martin Luther King, Jr.

LEGISLATION 95th Congress

H. Res. 465 (Dent). Provided for the funding of the Select Committee on Assassinations at \$2.5 million for one year. Adopted by the House on Apr. 28, 1977.

H. Res. 433 (Stokes et al.). Provided for the extension of the Select Committee on Assassinations for the duration of the 95th Congress. Adopted by the House on Mar. 30, 1977.

H. Res. 222 (Bolling). Amended H. Res. 9 and provided for the creation of a Select

Committee on assassinations which would expire on Mar. 31, 1977. Reported favorably from the Committee on Rules on Feb. 1, 1977, and adopted by the House on Feb. 2, 1977.

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94th Congress

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HEARINGS

U.S. Congress. House. Select Committee on Assassinations. Committee meetings. Hearings, 95th Congress, 1st session. Mar. 9, 11, 16, and 23, 1977. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 59 p.

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U.S. Congress. House. Select Committee on Assassinations. Committee rules of the House Select Committee on Assassinations; report. Mar. 18, 1977. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 11 p.

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Report together with additional and supplemental views. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1977. 18 p. (94th Congress, 2d session. House. Report no. 94-1781)

U.S. Congress. Senate. Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities. Final report. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1976. (94th Congress, 2d session. Senate. Report no. 94-755, parts 1-6)

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

June 20, 1977—G. Robert Blakey named chief counsel to House Select Committee on Assassinations.

June 13, 1977—James Earl Ray captured within 10 miles of Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary.

June 10, 1977—James Earl Ray escaped from Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary in Petros, Tennessee.

April 28, 1977—House of Representatives approved a budget of \$2.5 million for one year for the Select Committee on Assassinations.

April 11, 1977—Alvin B. Lewis (now resigned) named acting chief counsel and staff director of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. Lewis had been a special counsel for the committee since Dec. 6, 1976.

March 30, 1977—House Select Committee on Assassinations extended for the life of the 95th Congress.

Richard Sprague resigned as chief counsel for the Select Committee on Assassinations.

March 22, 1977—Staff of the Select Committee on Assassinations visited James Earl Ray in prison to question him about the King assassination.

March 8, 1977—Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez's resignation as Chairman of the House Select Committee on Assassinations accepted by the House. Congressman Louis Stokes named new Chairman.

February 10, 1977—Chairman Gonzalez fired Chief Counsel Richard Sprague from position on the Select Committee on Assassinations. Sprague refused to leave his post. Eleven members of the Committee signed a letter to Sprague endorsing him and stating that the Chairman's action was "invalid in law. . ."

February 2, 1977—H. Res. 222, which provided for the creation of a Select Committee on Assassinations that would expire on Mar. 31, 1977, was adopted by the House. Budget of \$84,000 per month for the two month duration endorsed by the House. Speaker appointed twelve members of the

House to the Committee with Gonzalez as Chairman.

Justice Department study concluding that James Earl Ray acted alone in assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. made public.

January 3, 1977—The Select Committee on Assassinations officially expired at the end of the 94th Congress.

December 9, 1976—Chief Counsel Richard Sprague went before the Select Committee on Assassinations with a budget proposal of \$6.5 million for the first year. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the budget to the full House in the 95th Congress.

November 15, 1976—The Select Committee on Assassinations confirmed Richard Sprague, former Assistant District Attorney in Philadelphia, as chief counsel for the Committee.

September 30, 1976—The House of Representatives endorsed a preliminary budget of \$150,000 for the Select Committee on Assassinations.

September 17, 1976—The House of Representatives adopted H. Res. 1540, which provided for the establishment of a select committee to be composed of 12 members appointed by the Speaker for the purpose of conducting a full and complete investigation and study of the circumstances surrounding the death of John F. Kennedy and the death of Martin Luther King and of others the select committee shall determine. Mr. Downing appointed Chairman of the Select Committee on Assassinations.

May 10, 1976—James Earl Ray was denied a new trial by the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

April 29, 1976—Attorney General Edward H. Levi ordered an Internal Justice Department review of files compiled by the FBI in the investigation of Dr. King both before and after his assassination.

November 24, 1975—The Attorney General directed the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice to undertake a review of the files of the Department and of the FBI to determine whether the investigation of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. should be reopened.

November 1, 1975—William C. Sullivan, former Assistant Director, Domestic Intelligence Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, testified before the Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities that from late 1963 until Apr. 4, 1968, when Dr. King was assassinated, the FBI conducted a campaign to harass and discredit him.

October 22, 1975—After 4 years of legal effort, James Earl Ray was granted a hearing to determine if he could retract his guilty plea and be granted a new trial for the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.

February 27, 1975—U.S. District Court Judge Robert M. McRae, Jr. denied James Earl Ray's request for a new trial.

March 10, 1969—James Earl Ray entered a guilty plea to the charge of murdering Dr. Martin Luther King and was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

June 8, 1968—James Earl Ray apprehended by officer of New Scotland Yard at Heathrow Airport outside of London.

April 19, 1968—The FBI identified fingerprints on a rifle allegedly used to assassinate Dr. King. The fingerprints compared identically to those of James Earl Ray, an escapee from the Missouri State Penitentiary.

April 4, 1968—Dr. Martin Luther King assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.

April 3, 1968—Dr. Martin Luther King arrived in Memphis, Tennessee, to lead a march in support of striking sanitation workers.

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