

JFK Probe Official Outlines Role for Justice Department

Associated Press

The government should concentrate a new examination of the assassination of President Kennedy on the possibility that individual members of organized crime or anti-Castro Cubans were involved, a House investigator said yesterday.

"This is an area which we believe further investigation is most warranted by the Department of Justice," said Rep. Richardson Preyer (D-N.C.), chairman of the Kennedy subcommittee of the House Assassinations Committee.

The committee is pressing the department to investigate what it says is evidence that both Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. were slain as a result of conspiracies.

There was no response from the department over the weekend, but Deputy Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti told the panel earlier that his agency was reluctant to reopen the cases.

In the synopsis of a final report to be issued this spring, the committee said Saturday that scientific evidence shows that Kennedy "probably" was murdered in a cross fire of conspiring gunmen and that circumstantial evidence indicates a "likelihood" that King's murder also stemmed from a conspiracy.

Referring to Kennedy's assassination in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963, Preyer said in a statement: "Our committee believes that it was not a political conspiracy in the broad sense of the word. We exculpate all major groups and conclude that changing the institutions of government was not the goal of the possible conspirators.

"We find definitely that there is not a scintilla of evidence implicating involvement in the assassination by the Secret Service, CIA and the FBI . . . The committee believes the Soviet government and the Cuban government were not involved in the assassination. We also believe that anti-Castro Cuban groups and the national syndicate of organized crime were not involved."

But, he added, the panel "does not preclude that individual members of organized crime or anti-Castro Cuban groups were involved."

Del. Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.), chairman of the King subcommittee, asserted Sunday that the Justice Department could prove in six months whether the two assassinations were conspiracies.

Fauntroy told reporters the department has an obligation to make up for what the committee called past failures in both investigations.

Rep. Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), chairman of the assassinations panel, said he hopes the department will investigate new evidence that acoustics experts testified establishes "beyond a reasonable doubt" that a second gunman, located on the grassy knoll, fired at Kennedy.

The Warren Commission, which investigated Kennedy's death, concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the killing.

Stokes said the Justice Department also has an obligation to investigate circumstantial evidence that a \$50,000 bounty led James Earl Ray to murder King in Memphis on April 4, 1968.