

# Crime Fighters Divide On Assassination Risk In Limiting Probers

Associated Press

Secret Service and Justice Department officials disagreed publicly yesterday over whether tighter curbs on investigations leave them less likely to learn of assassination threats.

Secret Service Director H. Stewart Knight told the House Assassinations Committee that new restrictions on investigating domestic groups hamper his ability to prevent assassination.

Knight said he no longer gets the intelligence he needs on a number of domestic groups, "particularly those that advocate violence, disseminate information on bomb making and the like."

"In effect, we're trying to run a zero-error operation," Knight testified. "The best way to prevent something from happening is to know in advance who is planning what, when and where."

But Deputy Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti said the FBI believes it is supplying the Secret Service as much useful evidence as ever on assassination threats.

"Right now I have no knowledge, I've seen no studies, I have no information which indicates that an increase . . . of security investigations would lead to any positive increase of protection," Civiletti said.

He said the Secret Service is getting far less information because security investigations of domestic groups have fallen from about 20,000 cases a year to about 50. But he said the FBI believes it is gleaning as much useful information on potential assassination threats from the 50 cases as it did from the 20,000.

[The committee completed its public hearings yesterday with the testimony from Civiletti, who also said assassination laws enacted by Congress clearly establish federal authority to investigate and prosecute political murders of a substantial list of government officials and members of Congress.

[Chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio) asked whether the Justice Department would be willing to continue investigating some aspects of the 1963 Kennedy assassination that the committee may not have time to resolve before it goes out of business next month. Civiletti was unenthusiastic, but gave no direct answer.

[Stokes told reporters after the hearing that the committee's final report will be issued by Jan. 2, but he could not give a precise date.]

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