

House Panel Wants To Continue Inquiry

Into Assassinations

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 31—The House Select Committee on Assassinations reported today that its preliminary investigation of the deaths of President Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had uncovered enough unresolved questions to require continuing its investigation of the killings.

The committee made the statement in an interim report recommending that the 95th Congress, which convenes Tuesday, approve a \$6.5 million budget for the first year of a two-year investigation.

The report said that, on the basis of "numerous areas of inquiry and the necessity to preserve evidence already under subpoena, the Select Committee unanimously recommends to the 95th Congress that the Select Committee on Assassinations be immediately reestablished to continue the investigation."

'New and Disturbing Questions'

The committee cited several examples of what it called "new and disturbing questions" about the two cases that it said remained unanswered.

"Did the Central Intelligence Agency deliberately avoid furnishing critical information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation which would have resulted in the surveillance of Lee Harvey Oswald prior to the assassination of President Kennedy?" the committee report asked.

Concerning the killing of Dr. King, the committee cited James Earl Ray's unexplained courtroom statement in 1969 disagreeing with remarks made by his lawyer and the state prosecutor that there had been no conspiracy to kill the civil rights leader.

"The committee does not mean to imply that there was or was not a conspiracy," the report stated. "It merely indicates that this is one of the areas which requires further investigation, especially in view of the failure to obtain a full statement of involvement from Ray by the Tennessee authorities."

Legislation establishing the Select



Representative Thomas N. Downing, right, of Virginia, discussing the report of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. At left is Representative Walter E. Fauntroy. Richard A. Sprague, the chief counsel, is at center.

The New York Times/George James

Committee was approved Sept. 17 by the House of Representatives and the group has been operating under a \$150,000 budget for the last three months. It has a staff of 68.

The committee several weeks ago approved a recommendation by Richard A. Sprague, its chief counsel and director, that the investigation of the assassinations would require at least \$13 million and two years to complete.

The committee's report and proposed budget will be used by its members to persuade the House to re-establish the committee and grant it the funds that Mr. Sprague has said are required to conduct an independent investigation of the two cases.

[Additional paragraphs at end of same story from NYTimes, as carried by SFChronicle, same date:]

The committee noted that 12 years had passed since the Warren Commission released its report finding that Lee Harvey Oswald was the sole assassin of President Kennedy and eight years have passed since James Earl Ray's plea of guilty was accepted.

"The passage of time has not healed the national trauma caused by these assassinations," the report concluded. "In the ensuing years, old doubts have remained and new and disturbing questions have been raised as additional evidence has come to light."