

AO14WX

ulv  
Kennedy Grave Bjt 530  
By JOSEPH E. MOHBAT  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON AP - Lyndon B. Johnson's final budget message omitted mention of a Defense Department recommendation of \$431,000 to provide public access routes to a grave in Arlington National Cemetery for Robert F. Kennedy.

A spokesman for Johnson, asked Friday why the former president omitted the item, said Johnson "would have nothing at all to say on the subject."

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, the sole surviving Kennedy brother, said Friday he hoped construction of a grave for Robert Kennedy could begin this spring with some public and some private financing.

A spokesman said the senator would have no comment on the failure of the Johnson administration to include the Pentagon's budget recommendation in the budget published Jan. 15. But it was apparent Kennedy was surprised and disappointed over the omission.

A Budget Bureau source said the amount recommended by the Defense Department was taken into consideration when Johnson, submitting his budget message five days before leaving office, listed \$150 million for contingencies.

This leaves it up to the Nixon administration whether to seek from Congress specific funds for work on the Kennedy grave before the contingency authorization expires June 30.

President Nixon must request the sum in a supplemental appropriation bill, or a congressman must include it in an amendment to such a bill, if the money is to be forthcoming.

The Kennedy family cannot begin construction of the grave with its own money until Congress provides funds for the Army Engineers to do their work.

Robert Kennedy was assassinated last June as he left a celebration of his victory in the California presidential primary. His body lies in a plain grave, marked only with a white wooden cross, a few yards from the more elaborate grave of his presidential brother.

The cost of John Kennedy's grave was about \$2 million, with Congress paying \$1.77 million for access routes and public facilities, the Kennedy family covering the \$309,000 cost of the grave area itself.

There is no precedent for allotting a quarter-acre gravesite in an overcrowded national cemetery to a senator. President William Howard Taft rests in a much more modest plot.

But the Taft grave has few visitors, while thousands are drawn to Robert Kennedy's temporary gravesite. This stream of witnesses to a double national and family tragedy might be expected to continue even after Robert Kennedy's grave is moved.

The story of the attempt to get public money for public access to a new, family-financed grave for

There is no precedent for allotting a quarter-acre gravesite in an overcrowded national cemetery to a senator. President William Howard Taft rests in a much more modest plot.

But the Taft grave has few visitors, while thousands are drawn to Robert Kennedy's temporary gravesite. This stream of witnesses to a double national and family tragedy might be expected to continue even after Robert Kennedy's grave is moved.

The story of the attempt to get public money for public access to a new, family-financed grave for Robert Kennedy was pieced together Friday from a number of informed sources, none of whom wished to be quoted by name.

According to these sources:

Architect I. M. Pei, designer of President Kennedy's grave, submitted to the Kennedy family a design for Robert Kennedy's. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and Mrs. Robert F. Kennedy approved it. Then it followed the same path the plans for the presidential grave had taken.

The Army Corps of Engineers approved it and recommended to the Department of the Army that \$431,000 be spent to provide walkways and other facilities around the grave and preserve the architectural integrity of Arlington. The Kennedys planned to pay the cost of the gravesite itself—about \$585,000.

The Army recommended to Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford that he ask President Johnson to include that amount in his budget proposal for fiscal 1970.

Paul H. Nitze, then deputy secretary of defense, made the request Dec. 18 in a letter to Budget Director Charles J. Zwick. A tentative plan was to place the younger Kennedy's grave on the hillside above and to the left of the president's, overlooking Washington. It would have involved about a quarter-acre of land.

Nitze said it was hoped construction would be started this summer: "Therefore, it is necessary to award the design contract promptly" to allow time "for quarrying and cutting stone in advance of actual construction."

sr254aes feb 1