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Sprague plans talk with Castro

By Rod Nordland
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Richard A. Sprague has told associates that his reinvestigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy will include personal trips to Cuba to interview Premier Fidel Castro, according to a well informed source.

The source also said that Sprague plans to question officials in the Soviet Union.

Sprague, former first assistant district attorney in Philadelphia, has been named acting chief counsel of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, created recently to reinvestigate the assassinations of President Kennedy in Dallas in 1963 and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis in 1968.

Although Sprague said that he would make periodic public reports on the progress of the investigation, which is scheduled to begin in earnest tomorrow when the House committee reconvenes, he has refused to disclose specific plans.

"What we do during the course of the investigation is not going to be discussed, obviously," Sprague said yesterday. He declined to say whether he planned to visit Cuba.

But a reliable source told The Inquirer that Sprague hoped to meet with Castro in Cuba in connection with the investigation and that he believed Castro might be amenable to the idea. No firm plans have yet been made, the source said.

Numerous indications have sur-
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faced in recent years that Kennedy's assassination may have been connected with CIA attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro. The Washington Post reported Saturday that former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had written a memo about an informant who claimed that Castro had said that Lee Harvey Oswald told Cuban officials of his intention to murder Kennedy.

Sprague declined to comment on the memo, but it appears certain that the House committee will want to examine the circumstances surrounding the memo, which was apparently never uncovered during the original investigation.

The source said that Sprague also hopes to travel to the Soviet Union to speak to officials there about the time that Oswald spent there. The Warren Commission concluded that Oswald killed Kennedy acting alone.

In the King investigation, Sprague plans to obtain tapes and other materials gathered by the FBI during what has been described as a campaign of harassment of the civil rights leader, the source said.

Sprague himself said that "a good part of it (the investigation) has been getting things that have been done before," acknowledging that this would include collecting documents and classified material of unspecified "other agencies."

So far, Sprague said, "there's been indications of full cooperation" from other agencies. He declined to be more specific.

The select committee's investigation is expected to take two years, with a budget in the millions of dollars. Sprague said he plans to ask Congress to provide a staff of 170, including lawyers, investigators and clerical workers.

Two groups will work independently on the two investigations, and both will draw on the specialized functions of a computer staff, a library and research staff, and a staff of polygraph experts.

While the size of Sprague's proposed staff could make the committee the largest in Washington today, Sprague pointed out that the Warren Commission's staff and resources were much broader and that the commission only had one assassination to examine.

"In terms of numbers, this is minute compared to that," he said.

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