

SECRECY RESTUDIED ON ASSASSINATION

NOT 1992

Congressman Who Headed Inquiry Considers Change

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10 (Reuters) — Angered by the Oliver Stone film suggesting a coverup in the killing of President John F. Kennedy, the Congressman who headed the House inquiry into the assassination says he is now willing to consider recommending that the panel's secret files be opened.

In an interview on Thursday, the lawmaker, Representative Louis Stokes, said the movie, "J.F.K.," had attacked the integrity of House investigators and thereby offended him.

"I am certainly open to considering the question" of whether the files should now be opened, he said.

Mr. Stokes, Democrat of Ohio, had previously opposed unsealing the remaining records on the ground that everything substantive had already been made public. He had argued that the unpublished material consisted largely of raw reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigations that might defame innocent people.

The material is currently scheduled to be withheld until 2029, 50 years after Mr. Stokes's investigative committee reported its findings. Such restrictions are standard after particularly sensitive Congressional investigations, largely to protect personal privacy.

The panel, the House Select Committee on Assassinations, spent two years and \$5.8 million looking into the killings of Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In July 1979, it published 29 volumes of its findings.

The report concluded that Lee Har-

vey Oswald had shot Kennedy and that neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba, nor any Federal agency, had been involved in a conspiracy. But it suggested the possibility that organized crime had been involved, and it raised doubts about the one-gunman theory advocated by the 1964 investigative commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren.

Resentment Over Implications

In the interview on Thursday, Mr. Stokes expressed resentment at any implication that the restrictions on his panel's records were part of some vast coverup.

"I do have some very real problems with a person like Oliver Stone who has done no investigation of the matter," he said. He said Mr. Stone had done a "disservice to the integrity" of the official investigators.

As recently as two weeks ago, after "J.F.K." had opened around the country and stirred renewed interest in conspiracy theories, Mr. Stokes maintained his longstanding position that the remaining records should not be made public.

But in the interview, he said, "I'm not locked in concrete in terms of my position." He said he was offended at the suggestion that anything with a bearing on the panel's conclusions was being concealed.

Mr. Stokes said that before making a final decision, he would listen to public opinion and the preferences of his fellow lawmakers. "I will be open to listening to whatever anyone has to say regarding it," he said.

Because the records were sealed by the full House, it would take a House vote to unseal them. And without the support of Mr. Stokes, who is now in his 12th term and heading the House ethics committee, there is little chance that the House would vote to make the files public.

A previous resolution to open the files, introduced in 1983 by Representative Stewart McKinney, Democrat of Connecticut, did not reach the floor for a vote.

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