

By Tom Squitieri
USA TODAY

CIA documents released Tuesday confirm that federal agents tracked Lee Harvey Oswald for three years before he assassinated President John Kennedy in 1963.

CIA Director Robert Gates pledged to make public this week a 33-document file on Oswald's life before the assassination in order to help clear the agency of suspicion it had a hand in Kennedy's murder.

Gates provided a copy of the documents to the Senate Government Affairs Committee, which then made a copy available to The Associated Press.

Testifying before the committee, Gates said if Congress fails to pass legislation to unseal the JFK files, the CIA will examine its classified documents and issue its own report.

"I am determined, personally, to make public or to expose ... every relevant scrap of paper in the CIA's possession in the hope of helping to dispel this corrosive suspicion."

The Warren Commission in 1964 found that Oswald acted alone in shooting Kennedy from a perch in the Dallas School Book Depository on November 22, 1963. The defunct House Assassinations Committee said in its 1979 report that evidence indicated there was a second gunman.

Conspiracy theorists believe the CIA, FBI, organized crime and rogue elements had a role in the murder.

Congress is considering creating a five-member panel to decide which files should be made public. The president could veto release of any document that might compromise national security.

In a voice choked with emotion, Gates recalled how Kennedy's call to public service motivated him and how, as a college student in Virginia, he drove to Washington to watch Kennedy's funeral procession.

"With or without the legisla-



By Dean Curtis, USA TODAY
GATES: Says Kennedy's call to public service inspired him

tion, I intend to proceed," Gates said. "I owe that much to his memory."

The CIA data shows the agency's interest in Oswald was piqued by his defection to the Soviet Union in 1959.

The agency monitored his activities after he returned to the USA in 1962, including a visit to Mexico City that, conspiracy theorists believe, Oswald took to meet with others plotting to kill Kennedy.

Information collected by the CIA after the shooting of about 33,000 pages will still be held by the agency.

FBI Director William Sessions reversed an earlier agency position and supported the release of classified Kennedy documents. Also:

► Deputy Assistant Attorney General David Leitch said the White House is considering issuing an executive order that would unseal some executive-branch agencies' assassination documents.

Committee Chairman Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, said that move was an attempt to derail the congressional legislation.

► Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, head of the House Assassinations Committee, said "telephone intercepts" on calls from organized crime figures about mob plots to kill Kennedy will be released.

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