

^PM-JFK-Assassination,0552<

^Ford, Warren Commission Staffers Want Documents Released<

^By PETE YOST=

^Associated Press Writer=

WASHINGTON (AP) \_ Former President Ford and 13 staffers from the Warren Commission say there's nothing to cover up in John F. Kennedy's assassination and the CIA should disclose all its files on the matter.

They joined a growing chorus urging a complete airing of all government documents relating to the investigation of Kennedy's death, which has received renewed attention with the release of the movie ``JFK.''

The film suggests that elements of the government, particularly the Pentagon and the CIA, conspired to murder the president.

Records from two panels that investigated the assassination have not been released. Two percent of the Warren Commission files are sealed, while 400 cubic feet of records from the House Assassinations Committee are closed until the year 2009.

``I would like to deny to our critics that we are part and parcel of some kind of coverup,`` former Warren Commission lawyer Howard Willens said Thursday.

All 12 commission lawyers who are still living plus a commission staff member endorsed the request, which was publicized in news conferences in Los Angeles, Cleveland and Des Moines, Iowa, in addition to Washington.

Ford, the only surviving member of the Warren Commission that concluded gunman Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing the president, has made a similar request.

``Americans are entitled to know the truth,`` Ford wrote last week to House Speaker Thomas Foley, D-Wash., and Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, who headed the House Assassinations Committee in the late 1970s.

The House committee found that Kennedy probably was slain as a result of a conspiracy, basing its conclusion largely on acoustical evidence suggesting a fourth shot was fired at the president from a grassy knoll.

In his letter, Ford recommended the National Research Council should appoint a panel of scientists to review the acoustical evidence.

Filmmaker Oliver Stone stirred up the controversy with his movie released in December that suggests Kennedy was the victim of a government conspiracy.

Stone said in a statement Thursday: ``After 28 years of defending the indefensible, the Warren Commission staff members accuse me of corrupting the truth and of irresponsibility. But responsible people would have begun an investigation years ago.''

But the Warren Commission lawyers said in a news release.

``We

remain convinced'' that ``there was no credible evidence of ... any conspiracy,``

CIA spokesman Peter Earnest said the agency has ``responded in the past to all the authorized bodies that looked into this'' and would continue to do so.

But Willens said the CIA after Kennedy's death ``did not tell the Warren Commission the truth in all respects'' regarding assassination efforts.

It wasn't until 1975 that the Rockefeller Commission uncovered

CIA assassination plots against Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

One of the Warren Commission lawyers, David Belin, became executive director of the Rockefeller Commission.

The CIA in 1975 rejected Belin's request for all agency investigative records involving the Kennedy slaying.

``It's an example of excessive secrecy of our government,`` Belin told a news conference in Des Moines. ``It contributes to the decline of trust.``

CIA spokesman Earnest suggested it was ``sort of unfair'' to suggest that the Warren Commission should have been told about assassination plots involving foreign leaders.

``I believe we provided everything'' the agency was asked about, Earnest said.



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^Release JFK Records, Warren Commission Lawyers Urge<

^Eds: SUBS 6th graf pvs, Ford and, to note how long records sealed for and INSERTS new 17th graf, In response, with Stone statement.<

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WASHINGTON (AP) \_ A dozen lawyers from the Warren Commission joined former President Ford on Thursday in calling for disclosure of CIA files and all other government records on the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

The lawyers, plus a former commission staff member, urged "the broadest possible accessibility" to evidence in the probe of Kennedy's death, which has been the focus of renewed attention since the release in December of the movie "JFK." The film suggests that elements of the government, particularly the Pentagon and the CIA, conspired to murder the president.

"I would like to deny to our critics that we are part and parcel of some kind of coverup," said former commission lawyer Howard Willens, one of the 12. All the commission lawyers who are still living endorsed the request, which was publicized in news conferences in Los Angeles, Cleveland and Des Moines, Iowa, in addition to Washington.

Ford made a similar request in a letter last week to Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, who headed the House Assassinations Committee in the late 1970s. Ford's letter also went to House Speaker Thomas Foley, D-Wash.

"I would ... urge that all materials in the CIA pertaining to the investigation ... should be made available to the public," said Ford's letter.

Ford and the 13 want disclosure of the few Warren Commission records that remain sealed, plus release of 400 cubic feet of closed records from the House panel's probe. The National Archives is reviewing the 2 percent of the Warren material that is closed to see how much can be made public. Most of the closed records of the House panel are sealed until the year 2009, while a few are closed until 2029.

The Warren Commission concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in killing the president. The House panel concluded that Kennedy probably was assassinated as the result of a conspiracy, although it was unable to identify another gunman or the extent of any such conspiracy.

The House committee based its findings on acoustical evidence suggesting that a fourth shot had been fired at Kennedy from a grassy knoll. Ford urged the National Research Council to appoint a panel of scientists to review the acoustical evidence.

"Americans are entitled to know the truth," Ford wrote. Among the 12 Warren Commission lawyers was David Belin, a former executive director of the Rockefeller Commission, which in 1975 investigated allegations of unlawful CIA activities in the United States. While on the commission, Belin uncovered CIA assassination

plots against Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Later, the CIA rejected his request for all agency investigative records involving the Kennedy slaying.

"It's an example of excessive secrecy of our government," Belin told a news conference in Des Moines on Thursday. "It contributes to the decline of trust."

Oliver  
Belin and ex-commission lawyer Wesley J. Liebeler blasted Stone's movie "JFK."

McCCarthyism  
"I believe today we are experiencing a rebirth of in the false claims that the CIA and Lyndon Johnson were involved in the assassination or the coverup," Belin said in a telephone interview.

"Your movie is a vast tissue of falsehood, deception and distortion," Liebeler said in a letter to Stone released at a news conference in Los Angeles.

"I venture to hope that if the movie industry had any idea of the scale on which your movie corrupts the truth, rather than talk of awards, it would visit upon you the scorn and contempt you so justly deserve," Liebeler wrote.

Hollywood  
Stone has been awarded the Golden Globe award by the Foreign Press Association for "JFK."

In response, Stone said in a statement: "After 28 years of defending the indefensible, the Warren Commission staff members accuse me of corrupting the truth and of irresponsibility. But responsible people would have begun an investigation years ago."

Jack  
Lawyer Burt Griffin's Warren Commission work focused on Ruby, who killed Oswald at a Dallas police station.

always  
In urging the release of all records, Griffin said he's questioned whether there might have been another way that Ruby could have entered the building and whether someone in the police department might have let him in.

of  
"I think we have to look at this concern about the death of President Kennedy and indeed at any political assassination as a continuing and ongoing search for the truth," Griffin, now a common pleas judge in Cleveland, told a news conference there.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., was among the 12 former Warren Commission lawyers joining the request.