

# Head of assassinations panel wants

## Stokes: Release could absolve US government

By Clifford Krauss  
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The chairman of a congressional committee that investigated the assassination of President Kennedy said Tuesday that he would ask Congress to order the release of all government documents on the slaying in an effort to dispel public suspicions that the government was involved in a

conspiracy to kill Kennedy.

Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, chairman of the former House Select Committee on Assassinations, said the release of the documents, including intelligence agency files, could, however, strengthen evidence that mob figures were involved in the 1963 assassination.

The committee's files could be released if the House votes to do so, and Stokes' support would be influential in such a vote. But secret material held by other government agencies can be made public only with the approval of the House, the Senate and the president, and prospects for such approval are unclear.

The former House assassina-

tions committee sent 848 boxes of unpublished documents it had collected to the National Archives, where they were to be sealed until the year 2029. But the idea of unsealing the files has picked up momentum with the recent endorsement by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass.

Stokes said recently that he was leaning in favor of releasing the committee's documents, although he added that he believed they would add nothing important to public knowledge of the case.

But he said Tuesday that documents assembled by the CIA and FBI should be released, too. These documents are not part of Stokes' committee's files, although the

panel saw some of them during its inquiry.

These files include transcripts of conversations among prominent members of organized crime that were secretly, and in some cases illegally, taped by law-enforcement authorities in the six months before the assassination, said G. Robert Blakey, a Notre Dame University law professor who served as counsel to the House assassinations committee.

"In the interests of everything being disclosed," Stokes said in an interview, "let's get everything out that is sealed anywhere."

While a House vote could release the committee's files, there are concerns that the files, and the in-

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## JFK files opened

telligence agencies' information, could reveal intelligence sources and methods, as well as raw rumors that could needlessly harm the reputations of innocent people.

A senior aide to Sen. George J. Mitchell of Maine, the Senate majority leader, said Mitchell supported the fullest disclosure possible of government documents related to the assassination.

"If Mr. Stokes comes forward with any proposal," the aide said, Mitchell "would review it."

White House spokeswoman Judy Smith said of Stokes' proposal: "Presently, the White House has no position. We will of course review any request when presented."

Stokes expressed particular interest in the release of three tapes of secretly recorded conversations between FBI undercover agents and Carlos Marcello, a New Orleans organized-crime figure, in the late 1970s in which Marcello reportedly discussed his involvement in the assassination.

The tapes were sealed by Judge Morey Sear of US District Court in New Orleans in 1981 in order not to prejudice Marcello's trial for bribing a Louisiana official to receive state insurance contracts.

Marcello, 82, was released from prison two years ago and lives in New Orleans, where Blakey says he is in poor health.