

THE NATION

Congress takes up matter of JFK files

By Tom Squitieri
USA TODAY

An often-delayed resolution to open sealed files on the assassination of John F. Kennedy was introduced Thursday — with the warning that any new information might take up to three years to come out.

"Let the chips fall where they may," said Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., a former counsel for the Warren Commis-

sion, which originally investigated the 1963 shooting.

The resolution — which needs Congress' approval — calls for an independent panel to review and release 880 boxes of material. The documents are now sealed until 2029.

Also sought: KGB documents on the assassination. Accused killer Lee Harvey Oswald once lived in the Soviet Union and was married to a Russian. Only a special order by the

president could reverse a decision to release a document. Information also would be kept secret if it might damage U.S. foreign relations, invade individual privacy or disclose intelligence sources or methods.

"It seems to me the time has come to open these files," said Sen. David Boren, D-Okla., Intelligence Committee head and resolution co-author.

Many experts on the assassination doubt the records con-

tain any "smoking gun" revelations about a conspiracy to kill Kennedy. Others say the files contain new information on:

- ▶ A trip taken by Oswald to Mexico City just before the assassination, where he met with Cuban Embassy officials.
 - ▶ Oswald's contacts with U.S. intelligence agencies.
 - ▶ Efforts by some U.S. officials to hinder information flow.
- Documents already ob-

tained by USA TODAY show:

- ▶ Cover sheets on FBI documents sought by the Warren Commission were marked "OK to go to Commission," indicating pre-release censoring.
- ▶ A July 19, 1968, CIA memo was circulated to certain stations to help quash any new suspicion of a "sinister, political murder conspiracy" resulting from an assassination probe by then-New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison.