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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

General Counsel

9 December 1996

David G. Marwell  
Executive Director  
Assassination Records Review Board  
600 E Street N.W., 2nd Floor  
Washington D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Marwell:

The Director of Central Intelligence has forwarded to me your 27 November 1996 letter for response. I commend the efforts of the Review Board and its staff in reviewing and releasing hundreds of thousands of United States Government documents for greater public understanding about the assassination of President Kennedy. I also confirm the Central Intelligence Agency's commitment to continue working closely with the Review Board in carrying out its statutory authorities.

With regard to the requests made in your letter, I understand the Review Board's desire to demonstrate to the public that it has carried out its duties thoroughly and diligently. You have requested that CIA appoint an Agency Compliance Official to be responsible for ensuring CIA's compliance with its obligations under the JFK Act. The DCI has full confidence in Mr. John Pereira as Chief of the Historical Review Group (HRG) and has determined that Mr. Pereira will continue to act as the CIA official responsible for ensuring full compliance with the JFK Act and will remain the Agency's focal point with the Review Board.

You have also requested that CIA provide an Initial Statement of Compliance. Mr. Pereira and Mr. Barry Harrelson, the senior review officer for HRG, as well as the rest of the HRG staff, have always been available to you without restriction. The Review Board and your staff have been provided access to any relevant documents or information you have requested. As you know, the Review Board was fully informed as to the steps CIA took to designate Agency records as part of the President Kennedy collection. HRG has also arranged for multiple briefings by senior CIA officials from a wide variety of CIA components so that the Review Board can better understand the information it is reviewing. Given the current effective relationship between HRG and your staff, should you require additional assurances of this Agency's compliance with the JFK Act, I suggest that you contact Messrs. Pereira and

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Harrelson directly. As usual, they will provide you with the specific information you need as quickly as possible to continue to record CIA's compliance with the JFK Act.

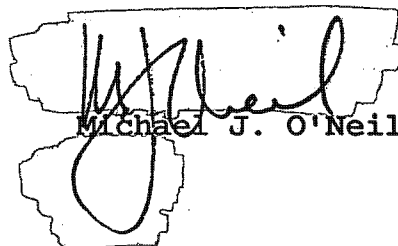
As to your request for a complete description of the steps CIA has taken to respond to specific requests, I understand that there are several outstanding requests. HRG has assured me that these requests have been discussed with your staff and responses will be provided to you as quickly as possible. Given the number and breadth of the requests that are being made by the Review Board and the limited staff resources available to CIA to process such requests, I ask that the Review Board continue to prioritize all its requests for information or documents. With the Review Board's priorities established in this way, the Agency can immediately work on those requests that are most important to the Review Board. Of course, as CIA responds to these requests, HRG will provide any information the Review Board needs as to how the searches were conducted. I believe that this method will best meet the needs of the Review Board and will allocate CIA's limited resources in the most efficient manner possible.

Finally, as to your requests to interview CIA officials responsible for this Agency's compliance with the JFK Act, Mr. Pereira has always been available to the Review Board for informal discussions as well as for giving sworn testimony including depositions. CIA has never objected to the Review Board deposing or interviewing informally any of its current or former employees and has, in fact, facilitated such interviews. You will also recall that, on 6 August 1996, Messrs. Pereira and Harrelson gave sworn testimony at an open hearing of the Review Board.

I trust that this responds to the concerns raised in your letter. Of course, if you should have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [redacted], an attorney in the Office of General Counsel, at (703) 874-3124.

With every good wish, I am

Sincerely yours,

  
Michael J. O'Neil

David G. Marwell

DCI/OGC/LD, [REDACTED] /76124 (2 Dec 96)

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