

1997 ARRB Cuba and MONGOOSE Declassification Session
Planned procedure and database requirements

1. STEP I: Record Identification

-- Tim, Joe, and Christopher will review documents from each of the collections involved in the Session at their current locations (NARA II, Pentagon, etc.). Upon determining that a record is "assassination related," the analyst will make two photocopies of the document. These copies shall be kept in identical stacks, clearly marked as to which collection they came from, and the stacks will be returned to ARRB offices.

2. STEP II: Numbering and Cover-sheet attachment

-- The ARRB military team will, at ARRB offices, go through each stack. They will assign a sequential number to the document, which will be marked by affixing a colored scotch tab to the side of each document and labeling it with the number. In turn, the analyst will prepare a cover sheet (*see attachment A*), listing the sequential number assigned, the originating agency of the document, the collection in which the document is found, and each agency which is reasonably believed to have equities within that document. The cover sheet will then be stapled to the photocopied document. At the completion of this phase, each document should have a cover sheet and a colored tab affixed to it.

3. STEP III: Database entry

-- At this point, it is anticipated that either (1) the analysts with the support of the admin staff; (2) clerk-typists on loan from one of the military services or entities; or (3) a group of interns will begin entering the data contained on the cover sheets into a database created specifically for this tasking. The database will have fields for each item included on the cover sheet, specifically including a list of entities with equities in the document, and the sequential number assigned. The purposes of this database will be to allow the ARRB staff to track exactly which documents are being reviewed, which agencies need to review them at the session, and to provide back-up information on each document should the cover sheet somehow become detached.

4. STEP IV: Notification of agencies and assignment of representatives

-- Approximately six weeks before the projected dates of the session, a letter should go out to each entity identified as having equities in the documents. The letter should be addressed to the same person within the agency to whom the initial compliance letter was sent. (Note: The letter should *not* be sent to the compliance official initially, because it is anticipated that

many of the compliance officials will not have the authority to assign someone to a week-long project to declassify documents.) The agencies should be instructed that within two weeks of the receipt of this letter, they should provide the ARRB staff with the name and telephone number of the person they have assigned to this session. In turn, the ARRB should deliver a copy of the ARCA ("JFK Act") to the assigned representatives, so that they may become more familiar with the Act and can contact ARRB staff with any questions which might arise.

5. STEP V: Sorting and printing

--Shortly before the beginning of the actual declassification session, the ARRB staff will run a sort on the database for each entity with an equity. The database will then print out a list of only the documents that the declassifier from each entity must look at. For example, the CIA representative will receive a sheet telling him that rather than reviewing all 5000 documents, to review only documents 1,14,26,27, 29, 35, etc.. There should also be a second copy of these sheets printed for administrative use by the staff further in the process.

6. STEP VI: The actual declassification session

-- For a period of approximately one week, representatives of the ARRB and the eight entities having equities in the documents being reviewed will meet in the ARRB conference room, and in an "assembly line" style session, will go about reviewing and declassifying the documents. Preceding the actual review of documents, ARRB staff will conduct a short (30-60 minutes) briefing reaffirming the Act and its standards. It is anticipated that examples of prior Board releases may be used to demonstrate our standards; the point is to reinforce that the overwhelming predisposition is for release, unless specific justifications can be made under a section of the Act. At the conclusion of this briefing, review of documents should begin. Each representative will review only those documents in which his/her entity has equities. For those documents which the representative agrees to release in full, he/she should sign the cover sheet, which will serve as the declassification marker for each document, in the appropriate area. For those where a postponement is requested, the representative should mark in brackets on the document where they are requesting the postponement, and then fill out a Postponement Worksheet (*see Attachment B*) for that document, and attaching the worksheet to the document. As each document is completed by all interested parties, ARRB staff will separate them, in sequential order, into piles of those being released, and those with postponements. At the conclusion of the review of all the documents, those with postponements will be reintroduced to the entire group. If there are instances where only one or two of the entities involved wishes to request postponement of an item, they will be asked to justify it for all concerned. (Example: "Okay, CIA, Joint Staff and State have all signed off on this; only the Navy wants it held off. Navy, what's the justification here?") For those documents which clear this second step and still have

postponements requested, the entities will be asked to formally request those postponements and the documents will be submitted to the Board at the earliest possible date for consideration.

7. STEP VII: Post-session organization

-- For those documents where all entities have accepted release, the documents shall be delivered to Steve Tilley at NARA. The ARRB staff shall take all documents with requested postponements and, by use of a Macro, mark each document in the database as being postponed by the respective entities. These documents will be presented to the Board at such time as the entities have had the opportunity to prepare a formal postponement request, and the ARRB military team has had the opportunity to render a recommendation on that request.

-- In the case of both documents released in full and those with postponements, there is still an issue to be settled as to who is responsible for RIFing these documents. One could make the argument that it should be the originating agency; however, due to the number of different entities which might possibly have originated the documents, this could result in documents which are sequential in the ARRB system being assigned vastly different RIF numbers, which seems to be a recipe for confusion or mix-ups. It is suggested that the responsibility for RIFing these documents be given to NARA; though they may be short of person-power to do this, it seems the most efficient and least confusing way to accomplish the goal.

-- It is hoped that the overwhelming majority of the documents will be approved for release in full without ever having to go before the Board. We anticipate being able to obtain consent releases on 75-80% of the documents on the first go-round, with a total of about 90% being released without ever requiring Board action.