

February 3, 1997

MEMORANDUM

To: Tim Wray
cc: Jeremy Gunn, David Marwell
From: Christopher Barger, Joseph Masih
Subj: Mass declassification session planning
File No: 4.0.?

Over the course of the last six months, it has become apparent that the most efficient way to achieve declassification and release of most of the military records we have identified would be to engage in a mass declassification exercise similar to the one conducted in Boston at the John F. Kennedy Library.

We have been conceptualizing this idea for quite some time, and adding records to the list of those that would be handled in such a session; however, we have not taken many steps to make this session a reality.

The purposes of this memo are to: 1) jump-start the process by putting a specific plan on paper; 2) provide for the successful implementation of this plan by setting out the actions we need to take before the session begins; and 3) identify and address questions or problems which might arise **before** they can complicate the plan. The memo is broken into sections addressing which agencies will take part in the session, which records are to be dealt with, the actual physical handling of the records during the session, and other planning issues.

I. AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE DECLASSIFICATION SESSION

As the review of military documents continues, we have identified nine agencies or entities which we believe have equities or interests in the documents we have tentatively designated "assassination records." Each of these agencies or entities should assign a declassification specialist to the Session.

The specialists should have both experience in records declassification and authority to do so. The ARRB should be informed by each agency of the identity of their declassifier before the Session begins, so we can better prepare to work with them.

The nine agencies/entities are:

The Army, The Navy, The Air Force, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Council, CIA, Department of State, and the FBI.

II. RECORDS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE SESSION

The ARRB military team has identified several records groups, stored in several different locations, in which assassination records appear and that could be included in this session. They include:

1. **Records from the files of former Secretary of the Army Joseph Califano, Jr.; stored at the NARA II facility in College Park.**
2. **Army Intelligence records stored at the Investigative Records Repository (IRR) facility at Ft. George Meade, Maryland.**
3. **Joint Chiefs of Staff OPERATION MONGOOSE files stored at the Records Management Division of the JCS, Pentagon.**
4. **Joint Chiefs of Staff Records stored at the NARA II facility in College Park.**
5. **"Site R" records available at the Pentagon.**

Records from other areas could possibly be assigned for inclusion in the Session, should the Staff decide it appropriate. These records should be transported from their various places of storage to the offices and SCIF of the ARRB in preparation for this Session at least two weeks before the beginning of the Session.

III. PRE-SESSION NEEDS AND PREPARATION

Before the Session takes place, the following actions need to be taken:

1. **Obtain permission from the various agencies (NARA, IRR, JCS) to retrieve and store the records in question at the ARRB offices.** Steve Tilley of NARA has indicated that there is a question of whether the records under his control can be transported to ARRB offices, or whether they must be kept at NARA. This process will be much easier to complete if the Session takes place at ARRB offices; thus, every effort should be made to convince Tilley of the necessity of our obtaining the records for storage here. If any of the other agencies/entities raise similar concerns, we should address them and get the records in our possession as quickly as possible.

2. **Notify each agency/entity of the impending session; inform them that they need to provide a declassifier, and set a deadline for the naming of that declassifier.** It is suggested that the week of April 14-18, 1997 be designated as the week during which the declassification session will take place. If this date is approved, we will need to give the agencies/entities as much advance notice as possible. It is hereby suggested that by Friday, February 14, each agency/entity mentioned above be contacted and informed about the session; we should give them until Friday, March 14, 1997 to inform us whom they have assigned; they should deliver the records in question to ARRB offices no

later than Friday, March 28, 1997.

3. **The ARRB military team should review the documents as comprehensively as possible for “assassination records” before the first day of the Session.** In the two weeks between the deadline for the delivery of records and the first day of the Session, the ARRB Military team should review the records. It is understood that not all the documents in these files will be assassination related. ARRB staff should designate which records within these files are assassination related and should be included in this Session. A color coordinated “dot sticker” system, similar to what was developed in Boston, should be used to identify entities with equities. For example, if a record is determined to have JCS equities, a red sticker could be affixed to the cover sheet; if the document has Army equities, a green sticker affixed, and so on. At the end of the two week ARRB review period, it is hoped that most, if not all, the records will have been designated and marked to show which agencies need to review them.

4. **A storage/record-keeping system should be developed.** As it will be very important to keep an accurate track of which records have been reviewed and what determination is made in regard to them, a meticulous recording system should be developed by ARRB staff and implemented prior to the first day of the Session. This system should allow staff to both know which agencies/entities have yet to see necessary documents, and also to identify which documents have made it through the entire process.

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