

MEMORANDUM

April 7, 2017

TO: Laura Denk

FROM: Doug Horne

SUBJECT: "Process Problem" with ONI Defector Files Transferred to ARRB Staff

Nature of Problem: In the spring of 1997, ONI informed ARRB that it had found approximately .8 cubic feet of "defector files" in response to ARRB and Navy requests for searches of ONI 's files at the Suitland Federal Records Center for assassination records. It was understood by the ARRB staff, based upon conversations with the ONI reserve officer who conducted the records search, that these records included defectors from the United States who traveled from the West to the Eastern Block. Based on this information, ARRB staff, without reviewing the ONI records, gave ONI the go-ahead to create RIFs for these documents.

Due to resource constraints within ONI, subject files were not transferred to ARRB staff until late May, 1998. A careful review in July and August of 1998 by Military Team staff members indicated that ALL of these ONI files pertain to defectors from the Eastern Block to the West, and that not even the two most "famous" defectors from the East who have professed knowledge of Oswald, such as Golitsyn or Nosenko, are mentioned. To repeat, I could find *no mention* of any defectors from the West to the East in these documents; the criteria used were the names in the HSCA's very thorough defector study.

These records do not appear to be assassination records based on content; furthermore, there is no evidence that the HSCA or Warren Commission looked at these files.

Staff Recommendation: Inasmuch as RIFs should not have been created by ONI unless the documents were assassination records, and since these records do not appear to be assassination records, recommend they be exempted from review under the JFK Act.

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File: 4.12.3 (ONI)