

March 10, 1997

The Honorable Jim Kolbe
Chairman
Treasury, Postal Service & General Government
Appropriations Subcommittee
House of Representatives
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
1705 Longworth House Office Building
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 02515

Dear Chairman Kolbe and Representative Hoyer:

As you may know, the Assassination Records Review Board has recommended that its mandate be extended for one year. Our recently issued FY 1996 Annual Report sets out the basis for our recommendation, and the Review Board Staff has met with your Committee staff to answer questions and provide additional information.

In making this recommendation, we are cognizant of the difficulties inherent in extending a temporary commission. We are aware of the concern that temporary bodies may have a self-perserving and self-perpetuating instinct, and want to assure you in the clearest and most unambiguous manner that the Board's recommendation is motivated strictly by its desire to complete the job. My colleagues and I were appointed as private citizens and have many competing claims on our time and energy. It is our collective conviction that the additional time is necessary, and our sincere commitment that we will complete the task by the end of FY 1998, if given the means.

The additional year will permit the Review Board to finish its task by competing: (1) the so-called Sequestered Collections, the huge and critically important collection of records at the CIA and FBI that were requested by the House Select Committee on Assassinations (well over one-half million pages must be reviewed by the agencies and released or forwarded to the Board for review); (2) the remaining records of all federal agencies and Congressional committees; (3) the search for additional records held by government agencies, private individuals and local governments (some of which have been identified, but not yet acquired); and (4) the continued search for the assassination records of a number of foreign countries.

As a result of the Boards necessarily protracted start-up, it has a budget carryover of \$500,000 in no-year funds from its first year, a sum that would fund a full quarter of its continued operation. The Board would consequently require \$1.6 million of additional funds to operate for one more year.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If we can be of further assistance or provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

John R. Tunheim, Chair

cc: The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
The Honorable Ernest Istook Jr.
The Honorable Michael P. Forbes
The Honorable Anne M. Northup
The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
The Honorable Carrie Meek
The Honorable David E. Price