

What will the Assassination Records Review Board accomplish by the end of FY97?

- *Government Records related to the Assassination* -- The Board will have reviewed and processed nearly all of the assassination records that have been identified by Federal agencies, with the exception of the FBI and the CIA. The overwhelming majority of previously redacted information will have been made public.

- *Identification of Additional Records* -- The Board will have identified additional government records that had not previously been located by the agencies.

- *Private and Local Records* -- The Board will have identified and secured significant assassination-related records in the hands of private citizens and local governments.

What will additional time accomplish?

- *Sequestered Collections* -- Additional time will permit the Board to complete its review of the huge and critically important collections of records at the CIA and FBI that were requested by the HSCA in the course of their investigation.

- *Foreign Records* -- The Board has started the process of collecting and reviewing records held by a number of foreign countries (Russia, Belarus, Mexico, England, Germany, France, Japan, Cuba). Contact has been made with several countries. Additional time will increase the likelihood of success.

- *The Records of Some Agencies and Congressional Committees* -- Additional time will allow the Board to finish its work with several agencies and Congressional Committees (NSA, Secret Service, Senate Intelligence Committee).

- *Search for Additional Records* -- Additional time will permit the Board's search for additional records held by government agencies, private individuals, and local governments to be concluded with greater confidence. Some of these records have been identified, but not yet acquired by the Board.

What will an additional year cost?

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

Why won't the Board be finished by the end of FY 97?

- *Unrealistic Time Limit* --The authors of the legislation believed that the task would take three years. That estimate was based on the best available information at the time, but the legislation established an unprecedented process. There was no way of knowing the problems of scale and complexity that the Board has encountered, nor was there any way to factor in the comprehensive approach taken by the Board in fulfilling its mandate.

- *Delay in the appointment of the Board* -- The Board was not appointed until 18 months after the legislation was signed into law. Federal agencies had to define for themselves the universe of records that should be processed under the Act and to speculate about the kind of evidence that would be needed to sustain the redaction of assassination-related information. Once the Board was in place, agencies needed to revise a considerable amount of work. In fact, many agencies have yet to complete their review and the Board is still seeking their compliance.

- *Protracted Start-up* -- Congress imposed several restrictions on the manner in which the Board could operate. Unlike other temporary agencies, the Board could not hire or detail experienced federal employees, but rather had to hire new employees who had to undergo background investigations and be cleared at the Top Secret level. Locating and renovating space that was suitable for the storage of classified materials was required. As a result, the Board could not begin an effective review of records until the third quarter of its first year.

Importance of completing the task

The Board is a solution to the vexing problem of continued government secrecy and the Kennedy assassination. A premature termination would surely generate intensified doubts among the general public about the commitment of Congress to

release all information that relates to the assassination of President Kennedy, as well as renewed speculation about the conduct of our government and its institutions and personnel. If appropriate closure is not reached now, the identical issues will no doubt have to be revisited in the future -- at even greater cost. The additional year will allow for a truly complete final report to be written that both the Review Board, the Congress, and the American public can point to with pride.