

During the first six months of FY1995, the Board was engaged in creating its infrastructure -- building a new federal agency from the ground up. Three aspects of our enabling legislation complicated this initial phase and necessitated a slower, more gradual start-up:

1. *The JFK Act prohibits the hiring of current federal employees.*

We were prohibited from arranging details or transfers of qualified government employees. The provision of the act seriously reduced the universe of qualified applicants.

2. *The JFK Act requires all employees to have a top secret security clearance.*

The clearance process is extremely unpredictable and time consuming. Consequently, we did not have a critical mass of cleared staff until May of this year.

3. *The JFK Act requires that the Board offices be suitable for the storage of large amounts of security-classified documents.*

This requirement limited the selection of office space for the Board and required special construction features. As a result, the Board was unable to occupy its office space until March of this year, and consequently could not accommodate more than a skeleton staff.

As a result of the delays in staffing and construction, the Board was not in a position to begin the actual review of documents until July of this year. Even though the Board could not engage in the full-scale review of assassination records during most of FY1995, it used its time and resources effectively in preparing the way for the efficient and confident review in the future.

### **Development of Computer System**

We spent considerable time and energy in developing a computer system that will allow us to track the thousands of documents that we have to review, record the actions of the Board, and produce the many and varied reports that the Act requires.

### **Critical Mass of Knowledge: Getting Up to Speed**

To make intelligent and responsible decisions about the release or postponement of assassination records requires substantial knowledge not only about the assassination of President Kennedy and the concerns of those who study it, but also about the agencies who own the records and their responsibilities and concerns. Some of the knowledge is highly technical in nature and involves issues that are extremely sensitive. Each member of the staff, prior to getting his or her clearance, engaged in a program reading and study focused on the assassination and the agencies in question. In addition, the staff arranged a series of briefings conducted by other federal agencies.