

June 9, 1997

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Mr. Ed Arnold
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Re: Proposal for a Multi-Agency Declassification Review of Joseph Califano's Army Papers under the JFK Act

Gentlemen:

The Assassination Records Review Board would like to make arrangements with you for declassifying six boxes of Army records from the files of Joseph Califano. The files date principally from the period 1962-63, during which Mr. Califano served as Army General Counsel and as Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. The records had been deposited at the National Archives and Records Administration, where they were recently located. A description of the records, which primarily pertain to U.S. activities related to Cuba, is attached hereto. We have identified what appear to us to be equities of numerous military entities in the Califano papers as well as equities of the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, the United States Information Agency, and others.

Deadlines

Due to the volume of the records, and the Review Board's current sunset date of September 30, 1997, it is important that we proceed expeditiously in our review of the records.¹ *We have slated the Califano papers for review by the Board at its August 5-6, 1997 meeting.* The Review Board staff is prepared to assist you in making arrangements for a prompt and efficient review of the Califano papers.

¹The Review Board is seeking from Congress a one-year, one-time extension to September 30, 1998. Congressman Dan Burton is sponsoring a bill to extend the life of the Review Board. Should the Review Board receive the proposed extension, we may be able to revisit the schedule proposed below.

Preliminary Review of Califano Papers

The Review Board staff has conducted an initial review of the records and has tentatively reached the following conclusions: *first*, the records are very similar in subject matter to many other records that already are a part of the JFK Collection; *second*, although the vast majority of the records technically remain classified, there is little remaining sensitivity due to the passage of time and the release of much of the information in other contexts; and *third*, the Califano papers contain equities of numerous military and non-military agencies, which, under the standard referral process, would be very difficult and time-consuming.² Thus, the logistical problem in declassifying the records is not the continued sensitivity of the records, but the number of agencies that will need to review their own equities in the records. For this reason, and for the short time-line on which we are now operating, we believe that there is an urgent need to make different arrangements for the review and referral of records.

Proposal

In order to expedite the process and make it more efficient, we would like to propose an alternate arrangement for declassification of records that we previously have found effective. We suggest the holding of a multi-agency concurrent review of the Califano papers. We would like to schedule a single session at our offices, on or before July 23, 1997, where all agencies with equities in the Califano papers be concurrently present for a declassification review. At such a session, agencies would be able to review their own equities in the records, declassify them, and simply hand them across the table to other agencies for their review. It has been our own experience that sessions of this sort greatly simplify the review process by giving agencies the opportunity to speak with each other and quickly to resolve questions.

Because the Califano papers will need to be reviewed by the Board at its August 5-6 meeting, we believe that an arrangement such as is proposed above will provide all agencies with a full opportunity to identify their equities in the records and to make determinations regarding the need for continued classification. If the Army and the Department of Defense are agreeable to such an

²Ms. Toni Bowie, of the Army Declassification Activity, spent three days reviewing some of the records and making recommendations for referrals to other agencies both within and outside of the military. Although Ms. Bowie worked energetically for three days, it was our sense afterwards that, if we continue at the same pace, the agencies with equities will likely not be able to complete their reviews before the August deadline arrives.

Messrs. Aly and Arnold
June 9, 1997
Page 3

arrangement, the Review Board will take the responsibility for contacting all non-military agencies with equities in the records while Army and DoD make arrangements for all appropriate military entities to be present.

We are, of course, very willing to consider other ideas or suggestions that you might have. However, because the clock is ticking, it is important that we promptly develop a plan that will provide all agencies with equities in the Califano papers to have an opportunity to review and declassify their equities.

I look forward to discussing this issue with you.

Sincerely,

T. Jeremy Gunn [or David?]
General Counsel

Attachment

cc: Steven D. Tilley
CIA
State
USIA
NSC

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