

The two agencies that have the largest number of records, and in which there is the greatest public interest, are the FBI and the CIA. With respect to the FBI, we believe that as long as the review of records continues at the current pace, and provided that we are able to resolve two outstanding policy issues, we will be able to complete our review ahead of schedule. That said, during the month of December there was a significant decrease in the number of FBI records that were processed. The FBI has assured us that this was due to vacations and the holidays, and that it fully expects to be back on schedule for January. The FBI also has been highly responsive to our requests for additional information and records and we anticipate no significant obstacles in that regard.

With respect to the CIA, we continue to have serious concerns that it is not making records available to us at a pace sufficient for us to complete our work on schedule. We have discussed this issue with CIA on several occasions -- most pointedly at a meeting on December 9, 1997. We continue to receive assurance from the CIA that their pace of review will improve and that they will devote the necessary resources to complete the task. We appreciate your having sent a letter to Director Tenet, and we anticipate that it will have the additional helpful effect of ensuring that CIA devotes the necessary resources to completing the task. We are also additionally concerned that CIA has not acted with sufficient speed in responding to our requests for additional information and records. Although CIA has answered several of our requests, other requests have been unanswered for more than two years despite promises to the contrary. This month we sent a comprehensive letter to CIA detailing the responses that had been answered and those that remained open. We would be happy to make a copy of this letter available for your review.

We very much appreciate your having sent letters not only to the CIA, but to the IRS, the Library of Congress, and Chairman Shelby of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. We have not received any communications from these offices in response to your letter, although we have received, apparently coincidentally, a communication from the IRS stating its wish to resolve outstanding issues early in January. We will keep you advised of any developments.