

11/30/95 Meeting with Bruce Miller/U.S. Customs  
Draft of Agency Contacts Entry

Bruce Miller of Customs came to the ARRB to meet with Phil and me this morning at 10:00. We first discussed agency responsibilities under § 5 of the JFK Act with regard to the assassination records that we have already identified from the Customs boxes at Suitland. I gave Mr. Miller a memorandum briefly summarizing Customs' responsibilities under the Act. We briefly talked about the electronic identification aids and he said that he would call Steve Tilley to get the disks.

We then talked about the 61 additional Customs boxes that I identified from the 135 forms that I believe Customs should review. I gave Mr. Miller a list of the boxes I identified and he agreed to have the boxes pulled at Suitland.

Mr. Miller then told us that he thought that the most recent letter that I sent to Customs had been counterproductive. (The letter responded to Mr. Miller's statement that he was not sure that he would be able to "take any more time off" to go back to Suitland and determine which of the Customs records there were assassination records. It stated that (1) under the JFK Act, Customs is responsible for identifying and organizing its assassination records, (2) the Review Board staff was willing to continue to assist Customs in complying with the Act, and (3) although Customs was already several years behind in the process, we were encouraged by their continued cooperation.)

He told us that it was Customs' view that the Review Board was not doing Customs any favors by assisting them in their review and that Customs believed that we were reviewing the records to serve our own purposes. I answered that the Act places the responsibility for identifying assassination records on the agencies. I told him that it was clearly more efficient for Customs and for us for Review Board staff to assist in the initial review process, rather than for Customs to review the boxes alone, and then follow up with letters verifying that they checked for various subjects and names.

I then told him that I wrote the letter in response to his statement that he might not be able to take time "off" to finish reviewing records. Mr. Miller responded that, as far as Customs was concerned, he was taking time "off" when he was working on JFK Act issues. He stated quite clearly, more than once, that the Customs Service placed JFK Act compliance quite low on their list of priorities. He then reminded us that Customs was a *law enforcement agency* with higher priorities than the JFK Act. He stated, however, that Customs intended to comply with the Act in a timely manner, but that since Congress had not allocated funds to Customs to comply with the Act, that compliance, again, was low on their list of priorities. I assured him that no agency in the Government, including the FBI and the CIA, had money to administer the Act and that we knew that Customs, too, had to divert resources to comply.

He said that he alone could review the 61, 1 cubic foot each, boxes in 2 days. He said that Customs

would allow me to come with him to review the records, but that he preferred that no other Review Board staff members accompany us on the next trip to Suitland. He told me that if I wanted to set aside 3 days to review the records, he would set aside three days. I told him that I would call him to discuss future trips to Suitland.

During the meeting, he asked to see any copies of Customs documents that we had at the Review Board. I had copies of three Customs documents in the SCIF. I gave him all three documents to take back with him to Customs.