

FIRST DRAFT -- FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

I believe it is appropriate to pass on some observations regarding the last Review Board meeting.

Of the two days devoted to Review Board work, less than two hours were spent actually deliberating on new postponements. As a result, the Review Board acted on only a small fraction (approximately \_\_ percent) of the records that the staff prepared for that meeting.

In some part, this was the result of unforeseen late developments (*e.g.*, the CIA's request for a briefing and the FBI's request for reconsideration of prior Board determinations). However, in considerable part this was also due to circumstances within the control of the Review Board. By \_\_ pm on Monday, November 13 and 3:30 pm on Tuesday, November 14, two Review Board members had left, leaving the remaining members without a quorum. We lost additional potential review time by convening forty minutes later than had been scheduled on Tuesday morning and extending a "fifteen-minute" lunch break to seventy minutes on Tuesday afternoon.

This accounting may seem inconsequential. But if such a pattern were to continue, the Review Board could never accomplish its most basic task -- reaching determinations on those postponements already claimed by various federal agencies -- within the allotted time.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the agencies we deal with are quick to take the Review Board's inability to keep to its scheduled pace as an invitation to ignore evidentiary deadlines we place upon them.

Accordingly, it is our intention to set and comply with detailed schedules for future Review Board meetings. The schedule for the upcoming December meeting is enclosed. Your cooperation in adhering to this schedule is greatly appreciated.

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<sup>1</sup>To take just one agency as an example, there are over 10,000 FBI assassination records that contain claimed postponements (not including nearly 200,000 pages as yet unreviewed by the FBI). To date, the Review Board has voted on approximately 120 FBI records, and the staff has obtained the FBI's agreement to release in full approximately 350 more.