

ASSASSINATION RECORDS REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES
July 8, 1998 OPEN BOARD MEETING
WASHINGTON, D. C.

The meeting was called to order by Chair John Tunheim at 10:20 a.m.

Participants in the meeting were Board Members Kermit L. Hall, William L. Joyce, Anna K. Nelson, and John R. Tunheim; and Assassination Records Review Board Executive Director, T. Jeremy Gunn. Henry Graff was unable to attend this meeting.

A motion was made by Dr. Nelson to accept the minutes of the June 4, 1998 Open Meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Joyce and carried by a vote of 4-0.

The purpose of this meeting is to continue the discussion of the Final Report. Dr. Joyce offered a preliminary draft of Chapter 7 recommendations which he had volunteered to prepare.

Focus points today included:

- Chapter 7 should address general points rather than specific legislation
- the need to carefully address the problem of third-party equities
- classification
- ask that FOIA be amended now
- a faithful record of all that the ARRB did
- cost benefit of declassification—also, what does it cost to classify, keep closed, and fight FOIA requests
- the Sunset provision of the law has been a problem, both staffwise and with the agencies, but it would also be difficult to get things done without a deadline—legislation should be goal oriented instead of time oriented because you don't know in advance the quantity of records, etc.; write legislation with a time to come back to Congress regarding the progress, work remaining, etc.
- should future boards have the same criteria for selection, such as no prior investigative experience; go beyond recommendations by associations so that corporate executives could be included for selection; professional background of board members is important; number of board members should be limited to small group

- should members of a board be advocates or neutral—this board has gotten more agency cooperation than advocates could have gotten—extremely dangerous to put “experts” on a board
- security clearances took a long time
- is a recommendation needed regarding the responsibility for postponed records (Gunn stated there would be a supplement to the report with document numbers and release dates)
- what will be the legal authority after September 30, 1998 (one of the weaknesses of the legislation)
- our electronic capacity will be passed on to NARA—but looking at each document will still be required
- a researcher will have to ask NARA to see a document
- should Congress appropriate funds for NARA’s ongoing responsibilities
- should a recommendation be sent to the Archives oversight committee
- what if something new is found

Particular attention was paid to comments received from the public, and the Board will continue to review them.

The Board asked that the ARRB staff attempt a cost analysis. Gunn commented that estimates of cost would require a lot of assumptions.

Dr. Gunn suggested a memo of understanding covering post-Board action between the FBI, CIA, and the Board. The Board agreed, and Dr. Gunn will arrange meetings.

There being no further business to come before the Board in an open meeting, Dr. Nelson’s motion to adjourn was seconded by Dr. Joyce, and carried by a 4-0 vote. The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerrie Olson