

April 9, 1997

The Honorable Jim Kolbe
Chairman, Subcommittee on Treasury,
Postal Service, and General Government
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Kolbe and Mr. Hoyer:

The Assassination Records Review Board has recommended that its mandate be extended for one year. Our recently issued FY 1996 Annual Report sets out the basis for our recommendation, and the Review Board staff has met with your Committee staff to answer questions and provide additional information.

In making this recommendation, we are cognizant of the difficulties inherent in extending a temporary commission. We are aware of the concern that temporary bodies may have a self-preserving and self-perpetuating instinct, and want to assure you in the clearest and most unambiguous manner that the Board's recommendation is motivated strictly by its desire to complete the job. My colleagues and I were appointed as private citizens and have many competing claims on our time and energy. It is our collective conviction that the additional time is necessary, and our sincere commitment that we will complete the task by the end of FY 1998, if given the means.

The additional year will permit the Review Board to finish its task by completing: (1) the so-called Sequestered Collections, the huge and critically important collection of records at the CIA and FBI that were requested by the House Select Committee on Assassinations (well over one-half million pages must be reviewed by the agencies and released or forwarded to the Board for review); (2) the remaining records of all federal agencies and Congressional committees; (3) the search for additional records held by government agencies, private individuals, and local governments (some of which have been identified, but not yet acquired); and (4) the continued search for the assassination records of a number of foreign countries.

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We have been advised by the office of Management and Budget that the Administration will support the Board's request for another year of operation at \$1.6 million (the Board has a budget carryover of \$500,000 in no-year funds from its first year, a sum that will fund a full quarter of its continued operation). The Administration will find the necessary offset and send to the Congress a budget amendment specifically for the Review Board or as part of a larger budget amendment.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If we can be of further assistance or provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

John R. Tunheim
Chair

cc: The Honorable Frank R. Wolf
The Honorable Ernest Istook Jr.
The Honorable Michael P. Forbes
The Honorable Anne M. Northup
The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
The Honorable Carrie Meek
The Honorable David E. Price