

RE: Public Meeting on August 6, 1996, 1:00 pm

Dear _____:

The Assassination Records Review Board is pleased to announce that it has nearly completed its review of the CIA's Oswald 201 File. There are fewer than ten documents that have yet to be reviewed, and we expect that this review will be completed within the next 60 days. These records constitute the core collection of CIA records that previously have been identified as assassination records. The volume of these records, now available to the public at the National Archives, is more than ____ boxes. The Review Board has conducted a word-by-word review of each of the postponements in these records and has, in the vast majority of cases, opened up the records to the public.

In addition to reviewing the 201 file, the Review Board has been (and is) continuing its word-by-word review of FBI postponements. While conducting this work, the Review Board has been also been releasing some miscellaneous records from the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), as well as records from several other Federal agencies.

During the next phase of its work, the Review Board will be redirecting its attention to two new categories of records: the HSCA archives and the CIA records that were segregated at the time of the HSCA and which are now known by the name of the "Sequestered Collection."

The HSCA archives records are now physically in the possession of the Review Board at our offices in Washington, D.C. During the upcoming months we will be conducting a word-by-word review of each proposed redaction in the HSCA records and we expect to be releasing in the near future many interesting records from the HSCA collection. As an example, we expect that the sworn testimony of John Scelso (pseudonym) to the HSCA will be available within the next month.

While the Review Board is turning to its detailed review of the HSCA records, it will also be reviewing the CIA's Sequestered Collection. The Sequestered Collection, which was created at the time of the HSCA's work, ranges from records of direct relevance to assassination to others for which the ARRB is unable to identify any relevance. We are now attempting to establish an approach to the handling of these records that is fully consistent with our mandate and responsibilities, and, at the same time, reflects a reasonable and appropriate investment of (Board, staff, and agency) resources. Separating the wheat from the chaff, and devoting our time to a detailed review of postponements in the "wheat," is essential to completing the most important parts of our mission on time. To help us determine the best approach to handling the large volume of records in the Sequestered Collection, we have scheduled a public meeting of the Board for August 6, 1996 at 1:00 pm in Room 206, 600 E Street NE, Washington, DC (adjacent to the Review Board offices). There will be an opportunity for the public to offer comment on this issue at that time.

Should you wish to make a comment at the meeting, please keep in mind that the period for public comment will be limited to a total of approximately one hour and that the speakers will be limited to 5-10 minutes. We will hold the record of this meeting open for two weeks to allow members of the public to submit written comments. We will be scheduling speakers on a "first come, first served basis." Please let Tom Samoluk (202-724-0457) know promptly if you would like to address the Board on this matter.

We do not now anticipate that the Board will be reaching a final decision on this issue at the August 6 meeting.

With best wishes,