

We have now completed six full months of the review of assassination records. It is appropriate to take stock and to evaluate where we are and where we need to go. One thing is absolutely certain—we will not be able to complete our mandate unless we change the way we conduct the business of the Board.

You will recall that prior to the formal review of records we made three presentations relating to the three major postponement issues (privacy, informants, and sources and methods) and suggested a strategy for approaching the staff review of records. For each of the major postponement issues, we presented a matrix reflecting the types of postponements within each major area and requested Board guidance on how they wished the staff to handle them. To assist the Board in making these decisions, we presented examples of the kinds of records that illustrated the types of postponements.

Interestingly, only in the area of privacy postponements was the Board able to provide the kind of guidance that the staff needs. Essentially, the Board informed the staff that they were unlikely to sustain any privacy postponements except for Social Security Numbers. In the case of informants and sources and methods, the Board was unable to make the kinds of decisions that would have been useful for staff guidance.

Faced with this situation, we decided to begin the review documents, hoping that a clear “common law” would emerge. We hoped that, with experience, the Board’s position on major postponement issues would reveal itself if one examined the body of decisions that the Board made. What has emerged is a confusing picture that fails to provide much-needed guidance to the staff or to the agencies.

A. The Board must reduce the number of records that are subject to discussion

1. Decide on (and communicate to the staff) a framework that guides its decisions.
 - a. The Board’s decisionmaking to this point has been based on an intense discussion of individual records...

2. Spend more time on the individual review of records
 - a. We will make the office and appropriate staff available on weekends
 - b. We will send a staff member with the records to you at a convenient place and time
 3. Make more and better use of consent agendas
 - a. Delegate some decisions to staff
 - b. Use Subcommittees
 4. Notation Voting
 - a. Consider accepting the notation vote of a majority of the Board as binding for a certain class of records (e.g., *releases*).
- B. The Board must develop and abide by a policy on reconsiderations.