

January 30, 1998

The Honorable Dan Burton
Chairman
Committee on Government Reform and Oversight
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is the Assassination Records Review Board's sixth monthly progress report, as required by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight report on H.R. 1553 (now P.L. 105-25), that extended the authorization of the Review Board until September 30, 1998.

At the January 22 closed meeting, the Board processed for public release nearly 3,600 FBI records, more than 1,000 CIA records, and approximately 350 records from other agencies. The nearly 4,950 records processed by the Board is its highest total for a single meeting. In addition, the Review Board recently released approximately 600 pages of military records regarding U.S. policy toward Cuba from 1962-63. Additional military records related to U.S. policy toward Cuba in the early 1960's will be ready for public release in the coming months.

The 710 records that the CIA made available for Review Board action at the January meeting is the highest number of records to date. Although the Review Board believes that the pace must continue to increase, the momentum is unquestionably in the right direction. The CIA also has advised us that they have added additional reviewers and indexers, which we believe should help it process more records during the upcoming months. We now are conducting weekly meetings with CIA for the purpose of evaluating the pace of the review process. The CIA also has increased its progress in responding to our requests for additional information and records. The requests that we had identified as priorities have now been answered either in whole or in part and the CIA has shown an increased willingness to respond to follow-up requests more quickly. While there are a significant number of additional requests outstanding, the increased responsiveness of the CIA bodes well for the completion of these requests in a timely manner.

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Since our December report, the Board's FBI team has reviewed an additional 20,000 pages of records from the FBI's House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) files. Included in these files are the names of individuals who have a prominent role in the history surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy. Although this page count is higher than last month, we have advised the FBI that the volume must return to earlier levels to ensure that the review is completed in a timely manner.

As I reported in my January 16, 1998 letter to you, all of the agencies and offices to which you addressed letters in December have now contacted us and pledged to complete their work in a timely manner. In particular, recent meetings and communication with the Internal Revenue Service have been fruitful and provide reason to believe that the IRS will fulfill its obligations under the law.

I would also like to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on the Board's federal compliance program. The State Department has submitted a draft final compliance statement and we expect that their obligations under the JFK Act will be completed and appropriately documented by early March. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have submitted their final compliance statement and the Board has advised them that they have completed their obligations under the Act. The Social Security Administration has also submitted its final compliance statement and has now received notification that its obligations under the law are fulfilled. We continue to work with the other federal agencies that have obligations under the JFK Act and the compliance program is proving to be an effective mechanism to document their progress.

Again, thank you for your continuing interest in the work of the Review Board and the support that you have provided in working with various federal agencies. Please do not hesitate to have a member of your staff contact me if you have any comments or questions. I can be reached at 724-0088, ext 226.

Sincerely,

T. Jeremy Gunn
Executive Director