

April 10, 1997

Mr. Michael Ravnitzky
612 Lincoln Avenue No. 301
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mr. Ravnitzky:

I am writing in response to your March 17, 1997 letter to Eileen Sullivan requesting an update on your requests and asking for some additional information.

We have forwarded to the Board your suggestion that a Public Meeting be held in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Although I am sure that Judge Tunheim would find such a meeting very convenient, the Board is not likely to hold a meeting in that location. As the Board prepares to conclude its work, it is likely that no more than one additional regional meeting will be held.

With regard to the specific names that you have provided for file checks, let me try the following answer. We have received literally hundreds of requests for name file searches. If we were to undertake searching the files for each name suggested, we would not be able to complete our important work of declassifying the files. Although I am sure that you understand what our job is, many other people seem to believe that the Review Board is something of an ombudsmen created for the purpose of facilitating research interests of members of the public. As I am sure you can imagine, there are some people who think that we should be spending our time searching through hundreds of figures in organized crime, while others think that we need to be looking at all of the CIA personnel affiliated with JMWAVE. Others think we should pursue all known contacts of George de Mohrenschildt. Unfortunately, we do not have either the time or resources to pursue all of the many interesting suggestions that have been forwarded to us. Thus we need to cull through the suggestions and determine those that appear to be, based upon our experience, the most promising for identifying records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. There are virtually an infinite number of possible leads that could be pursued, but not all of which appear as promising as others.

For the most part, we have found it to be counterproductive to respond to requests, such as yours, for specific updates. Let me give you an example. I received a call a few weeks ago from someone who asked what the status of a request was that he had made. I told him that I could give him no information. He then *published an article* stating that the Review Board had made the request and that the agency had refused to provide the documents (which was not true). We have found that it is

Mr. Michael Ravnitzky

April 10, 1997

Page 2

easier to say that we do not comment on the status of particular requests rather than to engage in the time consuming activity of trying to straighten out the record on what has and has not been said.

I am, however, able to tell you that several staff people looked into your many recommendations and that we have followed up with appropriate agencies on those that we anticipate are the most likely to produce promising results. One of your suggestions has resulted in a very involved attempt to secure records that are now in private hands and that we hope to obtain some interesting documentation. I can assure you that the ARRB staff has made its best judgment with regard to your suggestions and, as you know, all of our records ultimately will be transferred to the National Archives upon our completion.

Finally, we have been in constant contact with INSCOM and have made several visits to its facilities at Fort Meade. As you suggested, we are actively processing many of its records on several former military personnel.

To the extent that you wish to contact Board members, all of them receive mail here at our offices and you may contact them at our offices.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

T. Jeremy Gunn

General Counsel and

Associate Director for Research and Analysis

cc: John R. Tunheim, Chair