

The Assassination Records Review Board: An Update for the Research Community

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Chair
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As Chair of the Assassination Records Review Board, I am pleased to have this opportunity to communicate directly with members of the research community about the activities of the Board. There have been several positive recent developments relative to the Board, about which the research community will be pleased. In recent months:

- * The Board has received funding for fiscal year 1995;
- * Technical amendments have been signed into law extending the life of the Board;
- * Senior staff members have joined the Board; and
- * As this is being written, the Board has already held one public hearing in Washington, D.C. and has a second one scheduled for Dallas.

In addition, I had the pleasure of addressing the COPA Conference in Washington, D.C. on October 10, 1994. This was an important opportunity for me to speak directly with members of the research community and answer questions. It is precisely this type of open dialogue which the other Board members and I consider to be important as we undertake our responsibilities.

The Board is taking an aggressive approach to fulfilling our mandate to identify all records relating to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and review postponed records and information for public release. With funding for fiscal year 1995 and passage of the technical amendments to The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 which extend the life of the Board until October 1, 1996 (plus an additional year at the Board's discretion), the Board has been able to take action on several fronts.

First, the Board conducted its first public hearing in Washington, D.C. on October 11, 1994. The focus of this hearing was to gain public input as the Board works to further define the term "assassination records." The JFK Assassination Records Collection Act provided a brief definition of "assassination records," but the Congress did not more specifically define the term because it believed that such specificity was premature to this process. It left to the Board the challenge of defining the term. The Board heard some valuable testimony and we have a goal of issuing interpretive regulations on the subject of what is an "assassination record," by the end of this year.

The Board's second public hearing is scheduled for Dallas, Texas, on November 18, 1994. The Board believes strongly that it was important to schedule a public hearing in Dallas to allow members of the public and the research community who live in that area to have the opportunity to address the Board. This hearing will focus on gathering additional information relative to the existence and location of assassination records. The Board is looking forward to receiving helpful testimony during this hearing.

One of the most positive and significant developments for the Board has been the hiring of the Board's senior staff. The Board is extremely pleased that we have succeeded in hiring an experienced and professional senior staff that will play a critical role as we seek to fulfill our mandate to oversee the identification and release of all Kennedy assassination records. The Board has appointed the following senior staff members:

T. Jeremy Gunn, Esq. Gunn will coordinate records research and review.

Thomas E. Samoluk, Esq. Samoluk will oversee media relations and public affairs.

Tracy J. Shycoff. Shycoff will be responsible for administrative and financial affairs.

Sheryl L. Walter, Esq. Walter will be the Board General Counsel.

David G. Marwell was appointed Executive Director of the Board in July 1994.

As the Board continues its work, we hope that we can maintain a regular dialogue with members of the research community who possess so much knowledge about the assassination of President Kennedy. The Board wants to keep you informed and would also like to hear from you. We urge anyone who has information relative to assassination records to contact the Board at (202) 724-0088 or write us at: Assassination Records Review Board, 600 E Street, NW, Suite 208, Washington, D.C. 20530.