

An obvious question facing the Board in its last mandated year of existence is whether it will be able to complete its work on time. Until now, the Review Board has been faithful to the time constraints set by the Act. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for other components of the review process. Executive branch agencies and committees of Congress, almost without exception, have failed to review all of their records and make them available for the Board's review within the set time limits. Indeed, many have yet to complete even their initial review. The Senate Intelligence Committee, for example, has yet to process the complete holdings of its Church Committee files, and the FBI itself has claimed that it will be unable to complete its task before the end of the century despite a significant investment of resources. In the rare cases of appeal to the White House, the President has far exceeded the thirty-day appeal period, thereby leaving the Board and the FBI in doubt about important questions of precedent.

This lack of fidelity to the prescribed deadlines says (in most cases) as much or more about the ambitious time limits set by the Act as it does about the resolve and commitment of the parties involved. The Review Board has done its best to proceed in a practical and realistic fashion, and, with continued cooperation from most agencies and new efforts from others, will be able to complete its work in all but two areas within the three-year deadline. With the exception of the sequestered collection at the CIA (see page \_\_) and the FBI's HSCA collection (see page), the Board expects to complete its review of assassination records identified by federal agencies, collected significant non-federal records, and identified and processed additional federal records not identified by the agencies. The Board will not, however, be able to complete the word-for-word, document-by-document review of the records that make up the so-called sequestered collections of the FBI and CIA.

The Board has undertaken two initiatives in approaching the final phase of its work: (1) Faced with the knowledge that it would not be able to complete the review of the sequestered collections within the three-year time frame, the Board instructed the staff to proceed with its review of these collections using special guidelines (see page \_\_) designed to distinguish between records whose relevance to the assassination is clear and those not believed to be relevant. Applying these new standards will permit the staff to identify and review the most significant remaining records in order of priority.

(2) Beginning in November 1996, the Review Board embarked on its compliance program (see page \_\_) which is designed to document federal agency compliance with the Act. The compliance program will help us to organize our efforts in the final phase of our operation. Not only will it provide a record of the efforts on the part of the agencies, but it will allow for a comprehensive evaluation of completeness of the effort.