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Subject: Re: Suggested Vietnam Document Talking Points
TOM, THANKS FOR YOUR HELP. IF I GET ANY CALLS, I WILL LET YOU KNOW. BEST, KENNETH AT 03:52 PM 12/17/97 -0500, you wrote:>>>>In preparation for possible media interest in the Vietnam documents on>Monday, December 22, I have prepared the following suggested talking>points:>>1. The mandate of the Assassination Records Review Board is to make the>history surrounding the assassination as complete as possible for the>American public.>>2. Our job is not to characterize the records we release, but to enrich>the record of the assassination - for others to interpret and analyze.>>3. Today, the Board is releasing approximately 800 pages of previously>classified military records from 1963-64 that relate to U.S. policy on>Vietnam.>>4. The Board has aggressively sought to uncover records on U.S. foreign>policy, as well as other relevant areas, that put the assassination into>its historical context.>>5. Last month, the Review Board released previously classified military>records related to U.S. policy toward Cuba in the early 1960's.>>6. These military records on U.S. policy toward Vietnam add important>depth to the historical record because they are from both before and after>the assassination of President Kennedy.>>7. At the time of President Kennedy's death, Vietnam was increasingly>becoming a matter of foreign policy concern. Any records that add>substance to our understanding of the impact that the assassination had on>U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam are a welcomed addition to the JFK>Collection at the National Archives.>>8. Previously, we had some military documents that dealt with U.S.>policy on Vietnam from this era. But, these records add much more to the>record. For example, before this release, there were only short summaries>on the Secretary of Defense's May 1963 Conference on Vietnam in Honolulu>that were publicly available. Now, as a result of this release, we have>more than 200 pages from that conference. These records will reveal much>more detail about what went on at the conference.>>[Note: To determine whether any of the documents that we are releasing on>the May 1963 Conference had previously been made public, we checked the JFK>Library, the LBJ Library, the State Department's Foreign Relations,>1961-63, Volume III, Gravel Edition/The Pentagon Papers/Vol. II, and>consulted with Dr. William Conrad Gibbons, who wrote The U.S. Government>and the Vietnam War, Part II, 1961-64, published in 1984 by Congressional>Research Service, Library of Congress for the Senate Committee on Foreign>Relations. We were unable to find any indication that the records from the>1963 Conference (or any of the other records we are releasing on Monday,>for that matter) had ever been made public.]>>9. One reason these records are significant is simply because they are>newly released. They will be the subject of fresh analysis and debate, and>will supplement what was already known about U.S. policy on Vietnam from>this era.>>10. Without the Board's efforts and the mandate that it make the

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