

June 20, 1995

MEMORANDUM

To: David G. Marwell
T. Jeremy Gunn
From: Dennis J. Quinn
Subject: Update on Military Issues

This is a brief update on the current status of the Military's compliance with the JFK Act. While much of the information contained below is familiar to you, I thought a review of what has occurred so far would be helpful, particularly to the new Military Team Leader.

I. Agency Compliance to Date

As you know, last year Bill Joyce sent letters to each of the military service components. These letters were addressed "Assassination Records Liaison Officer." Unfortunately, the services probably never identified any one as such, since several of the letters were returned due to insufficient address.

It is unclear from the files whether any of the services actually responded to the Joyce letters. But some of the services have made an attempt to comply with the JFK Act.

A. The Department of Defense/Office of the Secretary of Defense(OSD).

The Joyce letter sent to DoD was returned by the Postal Service. I could not find any additional contacts with the OSD, or any other DoD components, such as JCS, DIA or DIS.

B. The Army Department. From what I can tell, the Army is the only service that has made a valid attempt to comply with the statute. On April 13, 1993, an order was issued from the Secretary's office informing all Army activities to search for assassination records. This order was accompanied by instructions implementing the Act. By June 4, 1993, most of the activities had responded with negative reports. Those records recovered included technical reports, lab notebooks and bullets used in ballistics testing at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds in spring of 1964, as well as summaries and notes prepared by Lt. Colonel Pierre Fink concerning the autopsy of the President, which were forwarded by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. I cannot tell from the correspondence whether these records were ever sent to the Archives.

But the negative reports should be treated with a degree of skepticism. One such report from Army

Central Security Facility clearly demonstrates a very thorough, yet unsuccessful search for assassination records. But in April we learned that the same command does have some records (see, Agency Contacts, April 12, 1995, Call Report from Henry Persons to David Marwell).

C. The Navy Department. Based on a review of our files and the "Agency Contacts" database, it seems that we have had no official response from the Navy Department. The Joyce letter sent to the Navy was one of those returned by the Postal Service. Bill did exchange letters with the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED or BMS). The BUMED letter stated that all of the assassination records held by that command were sent to the Archives in May 1994. I have reviewed those records at College Park and summarized them in a previous memorandum.

We also have copies of the Office of Naval Intelligence(ONI) file on Oswald. These documents have RIFs that were prepared by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS, formerly NIS) FOIA Office. Many are stamped "Reviewed By NCIS(ONI)/JFK Task Force." Some of these stamped documents apparently were reviewed by the Task Force on October 26, 1992. It is interesting that the NCIS had set up a task force that was already reviewing documents on the date our statute was enacted. But the Navy does have a great Office of Legislative Affairs, so it is very likely that it was reviewing the documents in anticipation of the statute's enactment. I have spoken to a Navy friend who was stationed with NCIS during this time and he recalls that the Service took the project very seriously.

But if the NCIS had already set up a task force by October 1992, what about the rest of the Navy? I am curious whether an "all hands" message went out like the one issued by the Army. I was stationed at the Office of the Judge Advocate General during that time frame and I do not recall seeing any such message.

D. The United State Marine Corps. I can find nothing in our file to indicate any correspondence with or compliance by the Marines.

E. The Air Force Department. The Air Force response to the Joyce letter was sent by Staff Sergeant Don Valentine on August 16, 1994, indicating that Andrews AFB did not have any assassination records. Needless to say, I do not think we should accept this as a satisfactory response from the Air Force.

II. Recommendations

I recommend sending our "boilerplate" or status letters to the Secretary of Defense and each of the service secretaries. Once we receive responses, I further recommend personal meetings with the

highest ranking officials possible, along the line of the meeting held with the Director of the FBI. These meetings are part courtesy call, but they are necessary to explain the scope of our definition and the extent to which the search for records should be conducted. The word must be passed from the top down that DoD will fully comply with the JFK Act. We then will need to identify points of contact at each of the various components and make sure they understand what we are looking for and that they actually look for it.

cc: File No 4.11

