

MEMORANDUM

December 20, 1995

To: David Marwell

From: Joe Freeman

Subject: Draft Language for Annual Report, re: HSCA

“The Board has begun reviewing records generated by the investigation of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA), 1976-1979. The HSCA generated over 50,000 records, representing some 600,000 pages of documents, now stored in close to 800 Hollinger boxes. The vast majority of these records were opened in full by NARA after the passage of the JFK Act, but several thousand remain postponed or, more frequently, have been referred by NARA to Executive Branch agencies. Moreover, HSCA records have a unique standing within the JFK Collection in that -- while Executive Branch agency equities are the most frequent cause of remaining HSCA postponements and referrals -- they are the property of Congress.

In the first half of 1995, ARRB staff held a series of meetings with NARA personnel and Congressional staffers intended to devise arrangements for the Board’s processing of HSCA records. In a letter dated October 11, 1995, the Honorable William M. Thomas, Chairman of the Committee on House Oversight, set out guidelines under which the Board could begin consideration of these important records. This date, then, marked the effective starting point for the Board’s active consideration of HSCA material.

Most of the HSCA records processed to date were postponed, or contained redactions based on, privacy considerations. Moving swiftly upon receipt of Chairman Thomas’ letter, the Board considered 198 such records at its October meeting. In November, the Board processed an additional 36 privacy-related records and, at its December meeting, the Board opened an additional 20 privacy-related records. **[David: we should also reference the small number of non-privacy-related HSCA documents Phil/Joan have processed... I’ll try to get this info from Phil ASAP].**

The Board is also working with Executive Branch agencies on HSCA documents referred to them by NARA. In order to facilitate the prompt processing of these records, the Board is encouraging agencies to review and release their equities in these documents as soon as possible. This approach relieves the Board of having to undertake a formal review of the records, while simultaneously saving the agencies time and effort. This policy has already resulted in the expeditious release of heretofore Security Classified HSCA testimony. The Board is hopeful that even more progress can be achieved in this manner over the next year.”

Freeman e:\wp-docs\122095
File 1.5.2