

# Assassination Records Review Board

600 E Street NW ■ Second Floor ■ Washington, DC 20530

July 11, 1995

Dr. Suzanne K. Forbes  
Archivist, Foreign Policy Materials  
The John F. Kennedy Library  
Columbia Point  
Boston, MA 02125

Dear Dr. Forbes:

Re: Status of **The John F. Kennedy Library** Identification and Review  
of JFK Assassination Records under 44 U.S.C. Sect. 2107

Dear **Dr. Forbes**:

As a follow-up to our telephone discussion earlier this year, I am writing to check on the status of The John F. Kennedy Library's identification and review of records relating to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

I would also like to make arrangements to send several researchers from our staff to the Kennedy Library to look at several collections of classified records which may prove to include records related to President Kennedy's assassination.

As you are aware, in 1992 Congress enacted The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act ("the JFK Act") in order to assist Federal agencies and ensure that all governmental records related to President Kennedy's assassination are collected and sent to the National Archives and Records Administration.<sup>1</sup> The JFK Act also established the Assassination Records Review Board to assist and ensure that all government entities comply with the law. The five members of the Review Board were appointed by President Clinton, confirmed by the United States Senate, and sworn in on April 11, 1994. Since then, the Review Board has assembled its professional and

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<sup>1</sup>44 U.S.C. Sect. 2107. The JFK Act was amended by the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Extension Act of 1994. For ease of reference, copies of both statutes are enclosed. If you have any questions regarding the JFK Act, please do not hesitate to contact me.

administrative staff and obtained the appropriate security clearances for personnel who review sensitive information. On May 3, 1995, the Assassination Records Review Board adopted a definition of "Assassination Record" as provided under Section 7(n) of the JFK Act.<sup>2</sup>

As this enclosure demonstrates, the definition of "assassination record" is quite broad. Accordingly, now that the Review Board has promulgated its definition, I am writing to inquire into the status of The John F. Kennedy Library's past and anticipated efforts to locate and review JFK assassination records, as well as to make arrangements for ARRB staff members to do their own search for relevant records at the Kennedy Library.

ARRB staff researchers will be interested in looking at classified National Security Files, particularly on Cuba and Vietnam, as well as relevant National Security Action Memoranda and minutes from National Security Council meetings, Standing Group meetings, Executive Committee meetings, and meetings on Vietnam. ARRB researchers will also be interested in seeing the public and private papers as well as any oral history interviews of numerous individuals such as McGeorge Bundy, George Ball, and Kenneth O'Donnell. The National Security Classified file and Confidential file of Robert F. Kennedy, as well as his telephone logs, telephone messages, and desk diaries as Attorney General, will also be of great interest to our researchers.

In addition, I would very much appreciate your prompt response to the inquiries set out below. I am enclosing a "Status of Agency Review of JFK Assassination Records" form for you to complete and return to me at your earliest convenience. I would appreciate your completing and faxing this to me no later than \_\_\_\_\_, 1995.

### Status of Review of JFK Assassination Records

Please fill out the enclosed form with reference to the following requests.

1. *Status of search for records.* Has your Agency completed its search for JFK assassination records? If so, approximately when was the search completed? If not, when do you currently anticipate completing your search for records? If your search is not complete, are there any particular obstacles to completing the process that you can identify? Has your search extended to records still within the ownership or legal control of your Agency, but outside of your Agency's physical possession (e.g., at Federal Records Centers)?
2. *Total volume of records.* What is your best *estimate* of the total number of records your

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<sup>2</sup> I am enclosing a copy of the definition to assist you in the identification and review of assassination records.

Agency has identified as responsive to the JFK Act? Please provide your best estimate on the actual number of documents, as well as any other helpful descriptive terms that are appropriate (*e.g.*, numbers of archival or banker's boxes, cubic feet).

3. *Anticipated additional searches for records.* Now that you have the Review Board's definition of "Assassination Record," what, if any, additional files or locations do you intend to search for possible additional records? When do you anticipate completing such a search?
4. *Status of record review.* Have you completed your review process, including the preparation of identification aids as provided by Section 5(d) of the JFK Act? If your review process is not complete, when do you currently anticipate that you will complete the process? What percentage of the review process is complete?
5. *Summary results of records review.* Of those records you have reviewed, approximately what percentage have you "opened in full," postponed (*i.e.*, redacted in whole or in part), or are awaiting return from Third Agencies?
6. *Transfer of records and electronic information to the National Archives.* Has your agency transferred all of its reviewed records and electronic information (*i.e.*, information identifying records as required under Section 5(d) of the JFK Act) to the National Archives? When do you anticipate completing the transfer of the records and electronic information?
7. *Electronic information.* Are you confronting any difficulties in completing your inputting the electronic identification aids onto the diskettes provided by the National Archives? If so, please describe the difficulties.
8. *Records sent by you to Third Agencies.* What is your best estimate of the number of records that you have referred to Third Agencies for their review? Of that number, how many have been returned after having been reviewed? What Third Agencies continue to hold your records and approximately how many records do they hold?
9. *Records sent to you from Third Agencies.* Approximately how many records have been sent to your agency from Third Agencies for your review under the JFK Act? For how many of that number have you completed your review? Have all Third Agency records been reviewed and returned to the Third Agencies? If you have not completed your review of Third Agency documents, when do you anticipate completing it?
10. *Record-tracking procedures.* What types of record-tracking devices do you use to determine the number, location, and status of your Agency's records under the JFK Act? For example, are all of your records now identified by a number on an electronic database or do you keep flow charts showing the date you referred documents to Third Agencies?

11. *Difficulties in complying with the JFK Act.* Please identify any significant internal difficulties that **The John F. Kennedy Library** is having in complying with the JFK Act.

Thank you very much for your help, **and we are looking forward to your response.** Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 724-0088, ext. 232, if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely yours,

David G. Marwell  
Executive Director

Enclosures (JFK Act and Extension, Definition, **1 form**)

**Blind copy**[cc]: T. Jeremy Gunn  
Mary S. McAuliffe

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