

January 6, 1997

Dr. James K. Galbraith
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Dear Dr. Galbraith:

Thank you for your letter of December 2, 1996 and the accompanying article on the National Security Council meeting of July 20, 1961. I appreciate your suggestions of material to be examined as possible assassination records. I can assure you that the Review Board is strongly committed to the earliest possible public release of any material relevant to the assassination of President Kennedy.

The Review Board staff has checked the available finding aids from the John F. Kennedy Library and has discussed the issue of releasing all available presidential meetings recordings on Vietnam with the staff of the Library. As you may know, the meetings recordings begin on July 30, 1962 and end on November 8, 1963. Recordings do not exist for the two week period prior to the assassination. The tape recording system was manually operated (versus voice activated) and was turned on only at President Kennedy's request by his secretary Evelyn Lincoln. In addition, the Kennedy Library is in possession of Evelyn Lincoln's daily log which indicates which meetings were taped and which were not. The log clearly shows that no recordings were made after November 8, 1963.

The Kennedy Library is currently in the process of producing transcripts and opening redacted versions of their complete collection of presidential meetings tapes. None of the recordings on Vietnam have been opened to the public, to date, but they are in process and will be opened by April 2000 at the latest. The Library and the Kennedy family are eager to have the tapes made available to the public. Access to the October 2, 1963 tape, mentioned in your letter, is controlled by the Kennedy Library and will be opened with the rest of the collection. I have spoken with Robert McNamara and he too has recommended declassification of the October 2, 1963 tape.

Until the meetings recordings are released to the public, the screening committee of the Kennedy Library, at its discretion, may grant permission for special access researchers to listen to any tapes. The researchers must have verified clearances from the agencies involved to be granted this access.

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Further information on this procedure may be obtained from the Kennedy Library directly.

Again, I appreciate your interest and your letter detailing the research that you have done. If there are other materials that you think it is important for the Review Board to see, I certainly would appreciate receiving such materials.

Sincerely,

T. Jeremy Gunn
General Counsel and
Associate Director for Research & Analysis