

March 11, 1998

Professor John Lewis Gaddis
Robert A. Lovett Professor, Military and Naval History
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P.O. Box 208324
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Dear Professor Gaddis:

I am writing to invite you, on behalf of the Assassination Records Review Board, to participate in a discussion in Washington, D.C., on April 14, 1998. Our purpose is to discuss criteria, standards, and methods for declassification and release of Federal Government records. Attendees will include officials from government, academe, and the private sector.

As you may be aware, the Review Board is an independent Federal agency that was created by the President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, 44 U.S.C. § 2107 (JFK Act). The five board members—the Hon. John R. Tunheim, Prof. Henry F. Graff, Dean Kermit L. Hall, Dr. William R. Joyce, and Prof. Anna Kasten Nelson—were appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. During the past three and one-half years, the Review Board has overseen the declassification of tens of thousands of intelligence and other records related to the assassination of President Kennedy. The Review Board has interpreted its mandate broadly to include, for example, some previously classified military records relating to U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba and Vietnam in the early 1960s.

In its work, the Review Board and its staff have acquired a sophisticated expertise on declassification issues and have applied the unique standards of the JFK Act to the records of numerous agencies, including the CIA, FBI, NSA, Secret Service, and the Departments of Justice, State, and Treasury. The standards for release of records under the JFK Act are much broader than those of either the Freedom of Information Act or Executive Order 12958. As it prepares its Final Report, the Review Board is considering whether it should make recommendations to Congress and the President based upon its experience in dealing with declassification issues.

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The Review Board believes that you would be able to make a valuable contribution to a discussion of several inter-related issues, including standards for declassification, procedures for improving and expediting government-wide declassification efforts, and proposals for clarifying and improving records-management procedures. There will be no need for you to prepare a paper or materials for this discussion, although we would be pleased to receive copies of papers on the topic that you would like to share with the Review Board or to have distributed to other participants.

I urge you to join us and the several distinguished persons who already have agreed to participate. In addition to the Board members, the current list of participants includes:

Steven Aftergood, Director, Project on Secrecy, Federation of American Scientists
Steven Garfinkel, Director, Information Security Oversight Office
David J. Garrow, Presidential Distinguished Professor, Emory Law School
Morton H. Halperin, Senior Vice President, Twentieth Century Fund
William H. Leary, Senior Director, National Security Council
Mike Loftumbo, Legislative Assistant, Senator Moynihan's Office
Kate Martin, General Counsel, National Security Archives
Roslyn Mazer, Chair, Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel
Page Putnam Miller, Director, National Committee for the Promotion of History
Mary I. Ronan, Archivist, National Archives and Records Administration
Britt Snyder, Special Counsel to the DCI, CIA
Evan W. Thomas, Assistant Managing Editor, Newsweek

The discussion will be held at the National Archives and Records Administration Building, Room 105, at 7th and Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C. The meeting will begin at 10:00 and end by 4:00. The Review Board will be pleased to cover the cost of your travel to and from Washington, D.C., and will make arrangements for a hotel to the extent necessary. We are able to offer you the modest honorarium of one hundred dollars. Please let me know if you will be able to join us. Do not hesitate to call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. T. Jeremy Gunn
Executive Director