
CHAPTER SIX

B. RECORDS ON CUBA

3. Presidential library collections

JFK Library records. Augmenting the JFK Library's initial search and identification of assassination records, a joint team of Review Board staff and representatives from CIA, State Department and OSD, visited the JFK Library in June, 1996 to conduct a comprehensive review of JFK Library closed collections. This joint-effort enabled an on-site declassification of records. The Review Board staff was granted access to all of the Library's National Security Files containing records on Cuba from the Kennedy administration. As a result of this effort, the JFK Library released 30 boxes of Cuba files which included assassination records identified by the Review Board that were sent to the JFK Collection. The Library also opened the presidential recordings on the Cuban Missile Crisis and sent copies of these to the JFK Collection. Subsequent to this visit, additional records on Cuba were identified as assassination-related. The Review Board coordinated the declassification of those records requiring multiple agency review. Of particular value were those records which discussed the

Kennedy administration's policy toward Cuba, proposed anti-Castro activities, and Operation Mongoose planning. Most of these records were generated by the Standing Group Committee of the National Security Council, with additional CIA and OSD memoranda discussing sensitive Cuban operations. The Review Board staff also identified Cuban records in the closed papers of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Richard Goodwin, and Ralph Dungan, and in the DOJ Criminal Division microfilm collection.

The Review Board discovered a wealth of Cuba material within the RFK papers, though not all of it was declared assassination-related. To ensure that these records were opened, however, the Review Board designated those which had some relevance to the assassination story as EHU's - records that could enhance the historical understanding. This group of records was subject to a Deposit Agreement requiring the express permission of the RFK screening committee to authorize their release.¹

¹The RFK Screening Committee was established in the 1970's for the purpose of overseeing the processing of RFK papers which were held on a deposit agreement at the JFK Library. It has traditionally been comprised of Kennedy family members and scholars. Current members are Max Kennedy, John Nolan and John Siegenthaler.

When the initial decision was made in 1996 to designate the RFK Cuba-related records as EHUs rather than as assassination records, the JFK Library moved to process them as part of the Executive Order mandatory review declassification. Consequently the Library included the RFK records in the pilot scanning project conducted by CIA, with the stipulation that they be reviewed under JFK Act guidelines. The process was delayed due to a combination of technical problems with the scanning project, and a change in leadership of the committee following the death of Michael Kennedy who had formerly been the head of the committee. At Although the final release of all the RFK papers has not yet been settled, JFK Library foreign policy staff is working on behalf of the Review Board in negotiating the release of the RFK papers with the RFK screening committee.

LBJ Library. To ensure a more complete review of the LBJ Library's holdings for assassination records, two members of The Review Board and a representative of National Archives visited the Library in March, 1997. A major part of this effort was to conduct a comprehensive review of the closed National Security files, including a more targeted review of Cuban records. As was expected, the LBJ Library was not as rich as the JFK Library

in material pertaining to Cuba. In addition to identifying records that had direct reference to assassination, the Review Board was also interested in those records that could reveal continuity or shifts in policy between the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. The Review Board designated additional assassination records pertaining to Cuba found in Johnson's Vice Presidential Security files, Cuba Country Files, in and various Office Files of White House Aides
