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August 4, 2026

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

The Public Interest Declassification Board greatly appreciates your decisive action on our recent recommendations for the review and release of previously classified records. Your Administration has shown time and again that historically significant records can be appropriately reviewed and promptly released in the public interest while continuing to safeguard our national security.

Building on that momentum, the Board recommends expedited declassification review and public release of a July 15, 2002, four-page National Security Council memorandum to Steve Hadley from Zalmay Khalilzad, which is a part of the Condoleezza Rice collection at the George W. Bush Presidential Library. This recommendation stems from a February 10, 2026, request to the Board from Congressman Josh Gottheimer concerning historically significant records related to the second Iraq War. The Board assesses that the memorandum contains primarily National Security Council equities concerning policy deliberations preceding U.S. military operations in Iraq and is devoid of intelligence sources and methods. We conclude that the historical significance of this document for the public's understanding of White House decision-making prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq far outweighs the need for its continued classification.

We are grateful for the prompt approvals provided by your Administration to the Board for access to these materials and for the unprecedented speed with which our Members were provided read-ins for the relevant Special Access Programs, enabling our line-by-line review of this and other related records. A detailed assessment supporting the Board's recommendation for the release of the July 15, 2002, memorandum, and other related records, will be delivered to the National Security Council.

Respectfully,

Ezra Cohen
Co-Vice Chair

Mark Angelson
Chair

Carter Burwell
Co-Vice Chair