

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

8 December 2022

Ms. Ellen Knight
Senior Director for Records Access and
Information Security
National Security Council
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Knight:

I am writing to provide an update on the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) ongoing efforts to review previously unreleased CIA information within the records collection established by The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992, Pub. L. 102-525, 106 Stat. 3443, 26 Oct. 1992, 44 U.S.C. § 2107 ("the JFK Act" or "the Act"). This letter is a follow up to the 15 December 2021 letter from the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (DCIA) responding to the President's 22 October 2021 Memorandum to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies.

In accordance with the JFK Act, the CIA is committed to doing its part to ensure that Government records concerning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy are ultimately disclosed to the public. As of October 2017, no CIA records in the JFK Act records collection remain withheld in full. Moreover, as the DCIA noted more fully in his 15 December 2021 letter, all information in CIA's JFK Act collection about President Kennedy's assassination itself has been previously released in its entirety. Records that do not pertain either to the assassination or to the investigation of the assassination are included in the CIA records covered by the Act because they were produced to the review board created by the JFK Act to provide background on CIA more generally. These records subsequently became part of the JFK Act collection.

Over the course of the past year, CIA participated in an intensive review of previously unreleased CIA information in the JFK Act records collection in collaboration with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). I am pleased to report that, as a result of this rigorous and transparency-oriented review, CIA has identified additional information within the collection that may be publicly released. Of the 11,511 records that contained redactions at the start of the one-year review, CIA has released in full 7,839 documents, and substantially reduced the overall number of redactions in the 3,672 records that remain released in part.

While the JFK Act and the President's 22 October 2021 memorandum seek to ensure maximum transparency with respect to Government records concerning President Kennedy's assassination, both the statute and the President's memorandum anticipate that certain information in the collection may require continued withholding under exceptional

circumstances. In our case, CIA has proposed specific information for continued withholding only where we have determined, in accordance with Section 5(g)(2)(D) of the statute and the President's 22 October 2021 memorandum, that there is an identifiable harm to intelligence operations that may result from disclosure, and the harm is of such gravity that it outweighs the public's interest—applying a rigorous transparency-focused standard to the review of the information at hand. The limited redactions that remain are necessary to protect information that would identify particular CIA employees, intelligence assets and sources, specific tradecraft and intelligence methods still in use, CIA cover mechanisms and facilities, specific operational details, foreign intelligence liaison relationships, certain CIA installations, and still-classified covert action programs still in effect.

CIA made every effort during this one-year period to release as much information as possible within the collection, with due consideration of the purpose of the JFK Act, the strong public interest in a complete accounting of the events surrounding the assassination of President Kennedy, and the President's specific direction. CIA remains committed to ensuring transparency in the JFK Act collection to the broadest extent possible and, to that end, has proposed the enclosed transparency plan setting forth the conditions under which the withheld information may be released going forward.

For the foregoing reasons, CIA respectfully requests the President's certification of the continued need to postpone the public disclosure of specific CIA information with the JFK Act collection, as identified in the enclosed index.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hurley V. Blankenship" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hurley V. Blankenship
Chief Data Officer

Enclosures as stated

cc: Ms. Debra Steidel Wall, Acting Archivist of the United States, National Archives and Records Administration