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report by the Committee on Government Operations of the House of Representatives, led to the dismissal of the original VA panel. Responsibility for giving scientific advice on Agent Orange was assigned to the National Academy of Sciences.

To his credit, President Bush took Secretary Derwinski's recommendation and overruled the OMB's resistance. This gave compensation to Vietnam veterans suffering from three Agent Orange-related diseases. In July 1993, the National Academy of Sciences made recommendations that led President Clinton to approve compensation for seven related diseases. This same panel recommended that joint research be carried out with Vietnamese scientists in Vietnam.

There are villages in southern Vietnam whose inhabitants were sprayed with Agent Orange and who have continued to live in these defoliant-polluted areas for a quarter of a century. And there are villages in northern Vietnam that offer ideal comparisons. They are identical in ethnic composition and other factors—except that they were never exposed to Agent Orange.

Anecdotal evidence and cost-limited studies so far point to significant increases in diseases and birth defects among Vietnamese in the South, as compared with those in the North. But more extensive studies are required to reach firm scientific conclusions.

As Chairman of the Agent Orange Coordinating Council, I went to Vietnam to assure myself, and then the U.S. Congress, that Vietnam would cooperate with U.S. scientists in the definitive scientific studies. All of the officials I met there were gracious in dealing with the events of the past, and all pledged total support for joint U.S./Vietnam research on Agent Orange.

The Agent Orange Coordinating Council and its members from veterans' organizations are now asking the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees to approve funds to permit definitive Agent Orange research in Vietnam. We hope that the long battle on the part of our veterans to gain U.S. government backing to gather the scientific evidence needed to settle the remaining health care controversies will finally have full federal support.



Another source—Cuban President Fidel Castro joins the list of theorists on the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy who reject the 1964 Warren Commission Report conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, shot the President.

Under pressure from the JFK Assassinations Records Review Board (ARRB), an independent agency with unprecedented power to force publication of long-secret documents (see *Washington Spectator*, Nov. 15, 1994), the FBI has now sent 10,228 additional pages of formerly "secret" files to the National Archives for public review. Most of them are FBI reports on the Mafia that were reviewed in secret in the late 1970s—without reaching any published conclusion—by the former House Select Committee on Assassinations.

A separate 149-page bundle of FBI files reveals that one of the bureau's two moles in high positions at the U.S. Communist Party had a conversation with Castro in 1964 during which the Cuban president pronounced that Oswald could not have acted alone. Castro told the American spy that he had had Cuban marksmen conduct elaborate tests duplicating the Dallas sight lines and firing time capabilities of the bolt action rifle used by Oswald. Similar tests were done by the FBI, which said they had neither proved nor disproved the lone gunman proposition.

The *New York Times* says the FBI reports on Castro's reenactment of the shooting "appear to cast doubt on those assassination theorists who have speculated that the Cuban leader had a hand in" Kennedy's death.

Further releases of withheld documents are expected to cast doubts on other assassination theories as well, according to the ARRB chairman John Tunheim.

At another of the ARRB's traveling public hearings—this one in Boston on March 24—Tunheim said the board expects to make more than 2 million additional documents publicly available in the next two years. Whether or not they turn out to be revelatory or relevant, the files awaited with the greatest expectation—from the Central Intelligence Agency—are still to come. Tunheim says, "Everyone should have a chance to look at them."

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

VIETNAM

American Combat Veterans Are Going Back to Vietnam

Introduction	1
For some, returning heals the wounds, by Gloria Emerson	1
One commander's journey back, by Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr.	3
FYI	4

