



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

February 25, 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE

This memo is to advise concerning the disposition of the casket used to transport the body of President John F. Kennedy from Dallas, Texas to Washington, D. C. on the day of the assassination. As instructed, the casket was disposed of at sea in a quiet, sure and dignified manner by an air drop into approximately 1500 fathoms (9000 feet) of water at $38^{\circ} 30'$ N. latitude and $72^{\circ} 06'$ W. longitude at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, Friday, February 18, 1966. A summary follows. Additional written statements are in the possession of the Archivist of the United States.

The casket in question came into the possession of the United States by delivery from Joseph Gawler's Sons Inc., the funeral directors responsible for the burial preparations of President Kennedy. The casket was reddish brown in color with a brushed satin polish and plain in appearance. The single lid was curved both at the sides and the ends, and was closed with two bolt clasps. Long fluted handles about an inch and one-half in diameter ran along both sides, with one of the handles slightly damaged by being bent at one end.

The casket was received from Gawler's at the National Archives Building, Pennsylvania Avenue and 8th Street, N.W., on March 19, 1964, and stored at all times thereafter in a specially secure vault in the basement of the National Archives building. There the casket was accessible only to three top officials of the National Archives: the Archivist, the Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries, and the Administrative Officer of the National Archives. The casket was kept in a dull blue wooden box of one-inch pine covered with brown wrapping paper. The only outsider permitted access to the casket was William Manchester, the historian commissioned by the Kennedy family. This area where the casket was kept is where some of the other Kennedy memorabilia eventually destined for the Kennedy Library are also stored.

By letter dated February 11, 1966, the Attorney General of the United States rendered his opinion that the reasons for disposing of the casket completely outweighed the reasons, if any, that might exist for preserving it. Careful consideration was given to various means of disposition which would be at one and the same time sure, quiet, dignified, respectful and appropriate, and it was concluded that these aims would best be met by an airdrop at sea.

A major concern in the planning of the airdrop was that the casket would fail to sink, particularly if it should shatter apart upon impact, which was considered a serious likelihood. Commander Carlisle A.H. Trost, a submarine officer with special training in hydraulics, went to the National Archives to inspect the casket and advise on the preparations for the drop. Following his recommendations, the casket was opened and three eighty-pound bags of sand were placed inside. The casket was then shut and bound with metal banding tape and replaced in the pine box, which was in turn bound with metal banding tape. Numerous holes were drilled in both the casket and the box to insure that no air pockets would develop. The total weight was some 660 pounds and the dimensions were 7' 2 1/2" long, 31 1/2" wide and 27 1/2" high.

Pickup was made at the National Archives building by Colonel Wm. A. Knowlton, USA, in an Air Force van with a closed back, driven by S/Sgt Ray R. Stilwell, AF 15436320, of the 93d Air Terminal Squadron. Delivery was received from Walter Robertson, Jr., Administrative Officer of the National Archives, and Lewis M. Robeson, Chief of the National Archives Handling Branch. The van proceeded directly to Andrews Air Force Base, and the load was placed aboard a waiting C-130E aircraft (No. 54960) from the 61st Troop Carrier Squadron. The aircraft was commanded by Major Leo W. Tubay, USAF, FR 42561, and co-piloted by Captain Frederick E. Clark, USAF, FV 3066163.

The senior loadmaster was S/Sgt Thomas E. Eagle, AF 13478093, who supervised the loading and the rigging of the load with two airdrop parachutes. The parachutes were to break the shock of impact upon hitting the water from 500 feet, the scheduled altitude for the drop. The weather was clear, with excellent visibility, and the ocean calm.

The selected point for the airdrop was as indicated on the first map attached hereto. This area was selected because it is away from regularly traveled air and shipping lines, is well out from the edge of the continental shelf with a depth of some 1500 fathoms, and would not be subject to trawling or other sea-bottom activity.

Take off was at 8:38 a.m. Aboard in addition to the regular crew was Colonel B. R. Daughtrey, Executive Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, who had made arrangements for the aircraft, and the undersigned. The aircraft proceeded southeast and northeast along the route shown on the second map attached hereto to the drop point, where the aircraft made a thorough search to determine that no vessels were in sight.

The aircraft then descended to 500 feet, opened the tail hatch and prepared for the drop. At 10:00 a.m. EST, the rigged load was pushed from the plane through the tail hatch, the parachutes opened shortly before impact, and the entire rigged load remained intact and sank sharply, clearly and immediately after the soft impact. Only one small plywood skipboard, on which the load rested during the ejection process, broke away. Included among the witnesses were Colonel Daughtrey, the two loadmasters (S/Sgt Eagle and AIC Michael E. Kelly, AF 13719923), and the undersigned. The aircraft circled the drop point for some 20 minutes at 500 feet altitude to ensure that nothing returned to the surface. The aircraft then proceeded directly back to Andrews Air Force Base, landing at 11:30 a.m.

The undersigned promptly informed Dr. Robert H. Bahmer, the Archivist of the United States, and Harold F. Reis, Executive Assistant to the Attorney General, (the designated contact points in GSA and Justice respectively) of the accomplishment of the requested mission.



John M. Steadman
The Special Assistant

Discussion Paper
President John F. Kennedy Funeral Expenses
to Oneal Incorporated, Funeral Directors, Dallas, Texas

A. Background

1. Oneal Incorporated, Funeral Directors, Dallas, Texas, furnished a solid double wall bronze casket and a funeral coach from their funeral home to Parkland Hospital, and from the Hospital to the Airport on November 22, 1963.
2. Oneal submitted a bill with no detail on January 7, 1964, for \$3,995 for "Solid double wall Bronze Casket and all services rendered at Dallas, Texas." On January 30, 1964, Mr. Merrell, the Director of Data and Financial Management, returned the bill advising Oneal Incorporated that a bill of this size should be itemized for proper evaluation and that an itemized bill would be given prompt attention.
3. In February 1964, Mr. Oneal met with Mr. Johanson, the Director of Regional Data and Financial Management, Region 7, and gave him a revised bill dated February 13, 1964, for the \$3,995, with a reduction of \$500 for "Less service charges which includes embalming, use of chapel, automotive equipment, professional services, etc.," or a net bill of \$3,495. Mr. Oneal advised Mr. Johanson that his manner of presenting the bill was an established practice and felt no further itemization was required. At this time, Mr. Merrell, and Mr. Carmine Bellino, who was spokesman for the family relative to funeral expenses, decided this bill also was too large. On March 20, 1964, we advised Oneal Incorporated that after discussion with representatives of the Kennedy Family, it was our mutual conclusion that the amount billed was excessive, and that the actual value of services to be billed to the Government should be in a greatly reduced amount. This memorandum was cleared with Messrs. Boutin, Bellino, and Turpin.
4. On April 22, 1964, Mr. Oneal visited Washington, D.C., and talked to Mr. Jack Gawler of Joseph Gawler's Sons, Inc., Funeral Directors, Washington, D.C., who referred him to Mr. Sasser. Mr. Oneal's main concern was getting possession of the casket he had furnished. He was informed that this was not possible, and was again requested to submit a fair, equitable, and itemized bill which would be given prompt attention. He thanked Mr. Sasser and departed. Since that time we have had no direct contact by Mr. Oneal.

5. Through a source who would give Mr. Sasser a quotation on the cost of the bronze casket only if he remained anonymous, we found that the wholesale price of the casket Oneal used was \$1,031, and that normal retail cost of a funeral with all services would be four to five times the price of a casket; in Oneal's case, \$4,000 to \$5,000. We could get no reaction as to a reasonable price that should be paid Oneal for the services furnished in Dallas.

6. On February 9, 1965, Mr. Spillan called Arlington Cemetery and talked to the gentleman in charge, Mr. Metzler, and was advised that Mr. Metzler was not aware of any case in which the Government purchased a casket as an individual item except specially manufactured caskets for use in vaults, and that he could not give us an opinion as to whether or not Oneal's bill was realistic, and the only organization he knew of that could render a judgment in this matter was the National Funeral Directors Association, 135 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

7. An item of interest -- The bill rendered from Gawler's Sons, Inc., Funeral Directors, who arranged or provided the services for President Kennedy amounted to a total of \$3,160, as follows:

"Services for PRESIDENT JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY.
November 25, 1963

Standard Service Quotation:

Arrangement and supervision of details; embalming and care of body, shaving; dressing and casketing body; services of funeral director and staff assistants at church and cemetery; use of necessary equipment; including solid mahogany casket as selected	\$2,460.00
Wilbert Triune Vault	<u>700.00</u>

Total Services and Merchandise \$3,160.00 "

B. Conclusions

1. We can find no one having professional knowledge who is willing to attest to the reasonableness of Oneal's charges of \$3,495. We can only compare Gawler's Sons, Inc. bill of \$2,460, for providing for complete arrangements, with Oneal's bill of \$3,495.
2. We think it unwise to write to the National Funeral Directors Association asking their opinion since they would probably inform Mr. Oneal.
3. Our opinion is still that the Oneal bill is excessive.

C. Possible Solutions

1. We can pay \$2,000 for the services rendered by Oneal which is the amount we consider reasonable based on the informal opinions we have received. However, if Mr. Oneal turns this down, it would probably get much undesirable publicity.
2. Since a service has been performed and a bill submitted, we could pay the \$3,495 and forget it. This would be a safer alternative since there would probably be no unfavorable publicity.
3. We could submit the bill to the National Funeral Directors Association for their opinion. This too might bring about undesirable publicity.

No matter what alternative is decided upon, we think it should be discussed with the Kennedy Family prior to final action.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Kennedy Casket

On February 16, 1966, Mr. John M. Steadman (DOD) and Col. William A. Knowlton (Army) met with Dr. Robert H. Bahmer, Archivist of the United States, Mr. Herman Kahn, Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries, and Walter Robertson, Jr., Administrative Officer, to make arrangements for the disposal of the Kennedy casket in NARS custody.

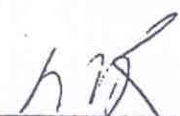
This was the casket used to transport the body of President John F. Kennedy from Dallas, Texas, to Washington, D. C., and which had become Government property in the custody of the National Archives.

The casket was reddish-brown in color with a brushed satin polish and plain in appearance. The single lid was curved both at the sides and the ends, and was closed with two bolt clamps. Long fluted handles about an inch and one-half in diameter ran along both sides, with one of the handles slightly damaged by being bent at one end. The casket was contained in a bluish-gray painted pine box.

It was agreed that, based on technical advice to be received from DOD, NARS would make the object secure; and it would be turned over to DOD for "disposal" by dropping in the ocean.

On February 17, Commander Carlisle A. H. Trost visited the National Archives and instructed Messrs. Robertson and Lewis M. Robeson, Chief of the Archives Handling Branch, on the procedures to be followed in making the object secure for dropping and sinking. Mr. Robeson followed these instructions as set forth in his report.

At 6:55 a.m., February 18, Col. Knowlton, Sgt. Stilwell, and Messrs. Robertson and Robeson rolled (on dollies) the object from the security area of the National Archives Building to an Air Force truck. The truck, with Col. Knowlton as a passenger, left the National Archives Building about 7:05 a.m.



Walter Robertson, Jr.
Administrative Officer, NARS

February 24, 1966

Date

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



National Archives and Records Service
Washington, D.C. 20408

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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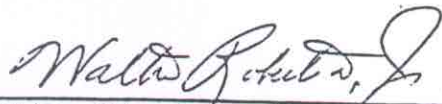
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Keep Freedom in Your Future With U.S. Savings Bonds

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Kennedy Casket

On Thursday, February 17, 1966, I was instructed by Mr. Walter Robertson, Jr., Administrative Officer, National Archives and Records Service, to make the casket and its wooden outer crate secure for turning over to the Department of Defense. On February 17 a Commander Carlisle A. H. Trost inspected the casket and crate and gave me specific instructions as to what to do. With the assistance of one other employee, Mr. Leroy Talley, Labor Foreman, Archives Handling Branch, I carried out this mission in the following manner:

- a. Unscrewed lid of outer wooden crate and removed lid.
- b. Removed the stuffed padding which had been placed between lid of crate and casket and a plastic drop cloth used as a filler.
- c. Bored approximately forty-two (42) one-half inch holes in the metal casket. Holes were bored at random through the top of the casket, and through both sides and both ends of the wooden crate and casket.
- d. To open the casket and place sand bags in it, the casket was raised up out of the wooden box high enough to gain access to the handle locks (there were two bolt locks which made the lid secure) and the casket lid was opened.
- e. Three (3) sand bags weighing approximately eighty (80) pounds each were placed inside the casket.
- f. The lid was then locked; and the casket metal banded and placed back in the wooden box.
- g. The stuffed padding was replaced on top of the casket.
- h. The lid of the wooden crate was screwed back into place and several holes were bored in it.
- i. The wooden crate containing the casket was then securely banded, and the crate placed on two dollies ready for rolling to the Archives shipping platform.

The job was completed at approximately 3:00 p.m., February 17, at which time the Security Alarm controlling access to the storage area was activated; it was not deactivated until approximately 6:55 a.m., February 18, 1966. At

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Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C.

FEB 11 1966

Honorable Lawson B. Knott, Jr.
Administrator of General Services
General Services Building
Eighteenth and F Streets N.W.
Washington, D.C. 200405

Acknowledge within 45 days
or Reply By 2/23/66

Dear Mr. Knott:

This is with further reference to our recent discussion concerning the question whether the casket that was used to transport the body of President John F. Kennedy from Dallas, Texas, to Washington, D.C., should be destroyed.

Since final settlement with the undertaker who supplied the casket has been accomplished, there can be no doubt as to its being the property of the United States.

As you know, the first section of the Act of November 2, 1965 (P.L. 89-318), declared "that the national interest requires that the United States acquire all right, title, and interest, in and to, certain items of evidence, to be designated by the Attorney General pursuant to section 2 of this Act, which were considered by the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy (hereinafter referred to as 'items'), and requires that those items be preserved by the United States." This statute plainly applies only to "items of evidence" to which the United States does not have title. Consequently, it does not apply to the casket which had already been acquired by the United States prior to the passage of the Act.

The Act, however, does express a public policy to preserve items of evidentiary significance, and I believe that this policy is equally applicable to items to which

the United States holds title but which are not in fact covered by the Act. Applying this test, I am satisfied that the casket is not such an item. The casket was not an exhibit considered by the Commission. The report of the Commission alludes to the fact that a casket was obtained immediately after the President was pronounced dead, but there is no suggestion that the Commission considered the casket as having evidentiary value.

Moreover, I am unable to conceive of any manner in which the casket could have an evidentiary value. Nor can I conceive of any reason why the national interest would require its preservation. It is obvious that it could never be used for burial purposes and its public display would be extremely offensive and contrary to public policy. Finally, so long as the casket remains in being, there is always a possibility that it could be misused or misappropriated.

Consequently, I am of the view that the reasons for destroying the casket completely outweigh the reasons, if any, that might exist for preserving it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert H. Taylor". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Attorney General

Office of the Attorney General

FEB 11 1966

[Handwritten marks and stamps]
10
Main 49
2/23/66

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Administrator of General Services
General Services Building
Eighteenth and F Streets N.W.
Washington, D.C. 200405

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Washington, D.C. 200405

Acknowledge within 48 hours
or Reply By 2/23/66

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Attorney General

February 3, 1966

6: 10 pm

Senator Robert Kennedy called:

Kennedy: I talked over there about what we are going to do with the casket that President Kennedy came back in. I have talked to Secretary McNamara about getting rid of that so he has made some arrangements. He is not able to get release of the casket. Wanted to see if we can get that released.

Knott: My concern, and I have not talked to the Secretary, but with his man Steadman, is the man who is at Dartmouth now (Manchester) and spent some time in National Archives and like so many of us, while writing the story, was quite outraged about this aspect and he had planned in the biography that he is writing, which I understand will be released in 1968, to include a chapter dealing with this particular subject. If this is so, I think it is going to raise loads of questions about the release of the casket.

Kennedy: In what way?

Knott: As to how it was disposed of. More than that, the Attorney General had a letter from Congress Cabell urging that it be disposed of and related it to an Act of Congress passed last year that dealt with the rifle, tagging it as Government property.

Kennedy: I don't think it was pertinent at all to this case.

Knott: The Attorney General has asked that we do nothing without clearing with him. I am held up by the Attorney General and until I could talk with you and you could explore the possibility in 1968.

Kennedy: Hope that won't be published in 1968 - I don't know why we need this around at this time.

Knott: I think it ought to be disposed of. I think I was one of the first to discuss the possibility of disposing of it. On the other hand, if, in 1968, someone is going to be publishing things that will raise the question

Kennedy: What question?

Knott: The question of authority to release and dispose of it.

Kennedy: I think it belongs to the family and we can get rid of it in any way we want to.

Knott: I don't want to appear negative - just want to be sure we are clear and that we do this when the timing is right.

Kennedy: I have talked to Secretary McNamara. What I would like to have done is take it to sea. Could you call him and make the arrangements with Secretary McNamara?

Knott: I am held up at this point in time for clearance from the Attorney General.

Kennedy: Why don't we go ahead - I will have Katzenbach call you. I don't know what this has to do with this matter even if he has a chapter on it (Manchester).

Knott: It is a disposal of Government property in one sense, although I took the position we were paying for services.

Kennedy: I don't think anybody will be upset about the fact that we disposed of it - I will take the responsibility for that and I will call Mr. Katzenbach and have him call you.

Knott: If there is no problem in your mind -

Kennedy: Will you call Secretary McNamara after you hear from Katzenbach?

Knott: Yes I will and we will make the arrangements from there.

EARLE CABELL
5TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
145 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

DALLAS OFFICE:
408 FEDERAL COURTS BUILDING
PHONE: RI 9-3571

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515
September 13, 1965

COMMITTEE:
BANKING AND CURRENCY

SUBCOMMITTEES:
INTERNATIONAL TRADE
SMALL BUSINESS

HARRY CRUTCHER, III
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Mrs. JO RYALS GUMMELT
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Honorable Nicholas deB. Katzenbach
The Attorney General of the United States
Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

With the passage of H. R. 9545, and the anticipated subsequent passage of a similar measure by the Senate, a matter presents itself to which I would draw your attention.

Among the articles involved in the incident of November 22, 1963, and which has previously not received too much attention, is the casket in which the body of the late President was transported to Washington. Inasmuch as the family of the late President (President Kennedy) did not see fit to use this particular casket in the ultimate interment of the body, this casket has subsequently become surplus.

It is an extremely handsome, expensive, all bronze, silk-lined casket and, fortunately, and properly, was paid for by the General Services Administration, and presently is in the possession of GSA.

This item has absolutely no more historical significance than does the plastic mattress cover in which the body was encased for shipment from Dallas to Washington, but does have a value for the morbidly curious. And I believe that I am correct in stating that this morbid curiosity is that which we all seek to stop.

I, therefore, would like to recommend to you that this casket, now in the possession of the GSA, be declared the proper property of the USA and, as such and in keeping with the best interest of the country, be destroyed.

I believe that the Administrator of GSA and others involved will concur in this recommendation.

Thanking you for your earnest consideration of this matter, I am

Respectfully yours,

EARLE CABELL, M.C.

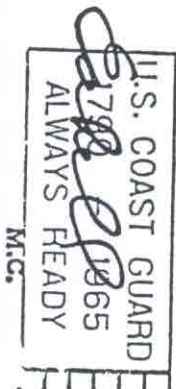
EC:KC

cc: Mr. Lawson Knott, Administrator ✓
General Services Administration

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Mr. Lawson Knott
Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington, D. C.



2-25-65

McGee called.

After his conversation with Mr. Knott yesterday, he found Johanson was ill and is still ill today. He called Johanson this morning--he was coming in tomorrow. Johanson called O'Neill to try to make an appointment for in the morning. Johanson reported to McGee that he had just talked to Mr. O'Neill and suggested they could perhaps get together and discuss further negotiations of the funeral bill. Mr. O'Neill said he possibly might come down a little but he was particularly interested in getting back his casket and he wants to store it in his funeral parlor with a proper exhibit on it. He stated that he is going to Washington in the morning and discuss this matter with Mr. Byrne and the man who is responsible for the releasing of this story he does not like; William Manchester visited here on August 27, 1964, and he gave him the whole story. Mr. Manchester supposedly represented himself to be with NARS. Mr. O'Neill was advised that the casket was in a warehouse in Washington covered with cellophane. He knows a man who gave him this information and will give the name to Mr. Johanson. He, O'Neill, can get hold of him. This man wants to hold on to the casket and have it run around the country and make money on it. O'Neill says he had discussed the matter with D. Merritt of the Houston Chronicle and he does not like the story he wrote and is going to sue him for \$100,000. His lawyer is handling the case for him now. Mr. O'Neill advised Mr. Johanson that he would call him back this afternoon. He is leaving tomorrow morning at 8:50 on a Braniff flight for Washington. O'Neill also advised that the editor of the Washington Post talked to him for 4 hours and he has been calling him all day today but O'Neill would not accept the call. O'Neill said he had been offered \$100,000 for the casket and the car in which the President's body was handled from the hospital to the airplane. He did not say who made this offer. He stated he would rather have his casket back as he wants it in his funeral parlor, properly identified. He said it would be good for his business. Mr. Johanson suggested to Mr. O'Neill that if he went to Washington that he see Mr. Lawson Knott. Mr. O'Neill said he was going to see Mr. Byrne and he is fighting the Government's story but said he is on the Government's side. He is mainly interested in getting his casket back. Mr. O'Neill says he knows the man who has the casket in the warehouse and will furnish his name. The man told him he was going to wait until things died down a bid and then he was going to take it on the road. The man has 20 years service and also has a brother and sister working in Washington. Mr. Johanson suggested to Mr. O'Neill that we might get together on about \$2,000 give or take a couple of hundred. Mr. O'Neill said he had already made a \$500 reduction and he felt his price was fair and in keeping with what was customary in his business. He assured Mr. Johanson he would call him back after he returned from a visit to his lawyer.

Mr. McGee added to Mr. Knott that they have a certified bill from O'Neill.

Houston Chronicle - February 25, 1965 (afternoon paper)

By: Kent Demiret, Chronicle Reporter

The Federal Government is balking at paying a bill submitted by the Dallas Funeral Home that handled minor arrangements after the assassination of President Kennedy.

The bill--lowered once by the O'Neal Funeral Home in Dallas--is for \$3,495. It was lowered \$500 at the request of the General Services Administration.

The O'Neal Funeral Home transferred the President's body from Parkland Memorial Hospital to the Presidential jet, which returned it to Washington. Included in the cost is a "double-walled bronze casket."

Asked Itemized Bill

No other services were performed by the O'Neal Funeral Home.

In Washington, GSA Director of Information John Byrne said:

"We first got a bill listing the flat sum of \$3,995 and we wrote back to the funeral home asking for an itemization of cost."

"In their next communication the funeral home lowered the bill by \$500 noting that the reduction was "less service charge".

"Our last communication was in March of last year. We asked for an itemization and noted that we felt the bill was still excessive. We have not heard back, and have made no offer."

Operator Reticent

The head of the funeral home, Vernon O'Neal, said he is reluctant to talk about the collection "because of all the bad publicity the funeral business has been getting since that book. ("The High Cost of Dying" by R.M. Harner).

He refused to say how much he is asking the Government to pay because it is a "trade secret."

"Everything is lined up now", O'Neal said. "They called me from Washington and New York, and I expect everything to be wrapped up immediately." He refused to say who "they" ~~were~~ are.

Byrne said the bill must be paid by the General Services Administration, however, no one there has offered to make a settlement with O'Neal.

"We have a letter outstanding to him (the letter of last March), and that's where it stands", said Byrne.

Dispute over Casket

O'Neal also said the Government plans to return the casket used for transporting the body to Washington (President Kennedy was buried in a wooden casket). He called the casket "very valuable."

"I am going to put it (the casket) in my display room in a glass case", said O'Neal.

Byrne flatly disagreed.

"We have stored the casket, as we feel that it the appropriate thing to do. It will not be returned. I do not know what will eventually happen to it," he said, "but it will not be returned."

O'Neal said he has made two trips to Washington in an effort to collect the bill, and has spent about \$500.

Charges Politics

In refusing to give details, O'Neal said he has conferred with the Funeral Home Directors Association, to which he belongs, and it was decided that details might result in bad publicity.

"I have had some networks make me some offers for the story", he said, "and believe me, some of the offers were mighty hard to turn down."

He added: "I doubt if there will ever be a story on this. It is something that none of us wants to go into." A Secret Service agent summoned the O'Neal Funeral Home to Parkland Hospital after the November 22, 1963, assassination.

The cost of actual services for President Kennedy were paid out of \$95,000 specially appropriated by Congress.

89TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 9545

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 8, 1965

Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

AN ACT

Providing for the acquisition and preservation by the United States of certain items of evidence pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That it is hereby declared that the national interest requires
4 that the United States acquire all right, title, and interest, in
5 and to, certain items of evidence, to be designated by the
6 Attorney General pursuant to section 2 of this Act, which
7 were considered by the President's Commission on the
8 Assassination of President Kennedy (hereinafter referred
9 to as "items"), and requires that those items be preserved
10 by the United States.

1 SEC. 2. (a) The Attorney General is authorized to de-
2 termine, from time to time, which items should, in con-
3 formity with the declaration contained in the first section of
4 this Act, be acquired and preserved by the United States.
5 Each such determination shall be published in the Federal
6 Register.

7 (b) Whenever the Attorney General determines that
8 an item should be acquired and preserved by the United
9 States, all right, title, and interest in and to, that item shall
10 be vested in the United States upon the publication of that
11 determination in the Federal Register.

12 (c) The authority conferred upon the Attorney General
13 by subsection (a) of this section to make determinations
14 shall expire one year from the date of enactment of this
15 Act, and the vesting provisions of subsection (b) of this
16 section shall be valid only with respect to items described
17 in determinations published in the Federal Register within
18 that one-year period.

19 SEC. 3. The United States Court of Claims or the
20 United States district court for the judicial district wherein
21 the claimant resides shall have jurisdiction, without regard
22 to the amount in controversy, to hear, determine, and render
23 judgment upon any claim for just compensation for any
24 item or interest therein acquired by the United States pur-
25 suant to section 2 of this Act; and where such claim is filed

1 in the district court the claimant may request a trial by
2 jury: *Provided*, That the claim is filed within one year from
3 the date of publication in the Federal Register of the deter-
4 mination by the Attorney General with respect to such items.

5 SEC. 4. All items acquired by the United States pur-
6 suant to section 2 of this Act shall be placed under the juris-
7 diction of the Administrator of General Services for preserva-
8 tion under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe.

9 SEC. 5. All items acquired by the United States pur-
10 suant to section 2 of this Act shall be deemed to be per-
11 sonal property and records of the United States for the
12 purposes of laws relating to the custody, administration,
13 and protection of personal property and records of the
14 United States, including, but not limited to, sections 2071
15 and 2112 of title 18 of the United States Code.

16 SEC. 6. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated
17 such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of
18 this Act.

Passed the House of Representatives September 7, 1965.

Attest:

RALPH R. ROBERTS,

Clerk.

89TH CONGRESS
1st Session

H. R. 9545

AN ACT

Providing for the acquisition and preservation by the United States of certain items of evidence pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1965

Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

MEMORANDUM OF CALL

TO: _____ Date _____ Time _____

YOU WERE CALLED BY— YOU WERE VISITED BY—

TELEPHONE: _____ Number of code _____ Extension _____

- PLEASE CALL
- WILL CALL AGAIN
- RETURNING YOUR CALL
- IS REFERRED TO YOU BY:
- WAITING TO SEE YOU
- WISHES AN APPOINTMENT

LEFT THIS MESSAGE: _____

Steadman
64-1-63-51

Received By— _____

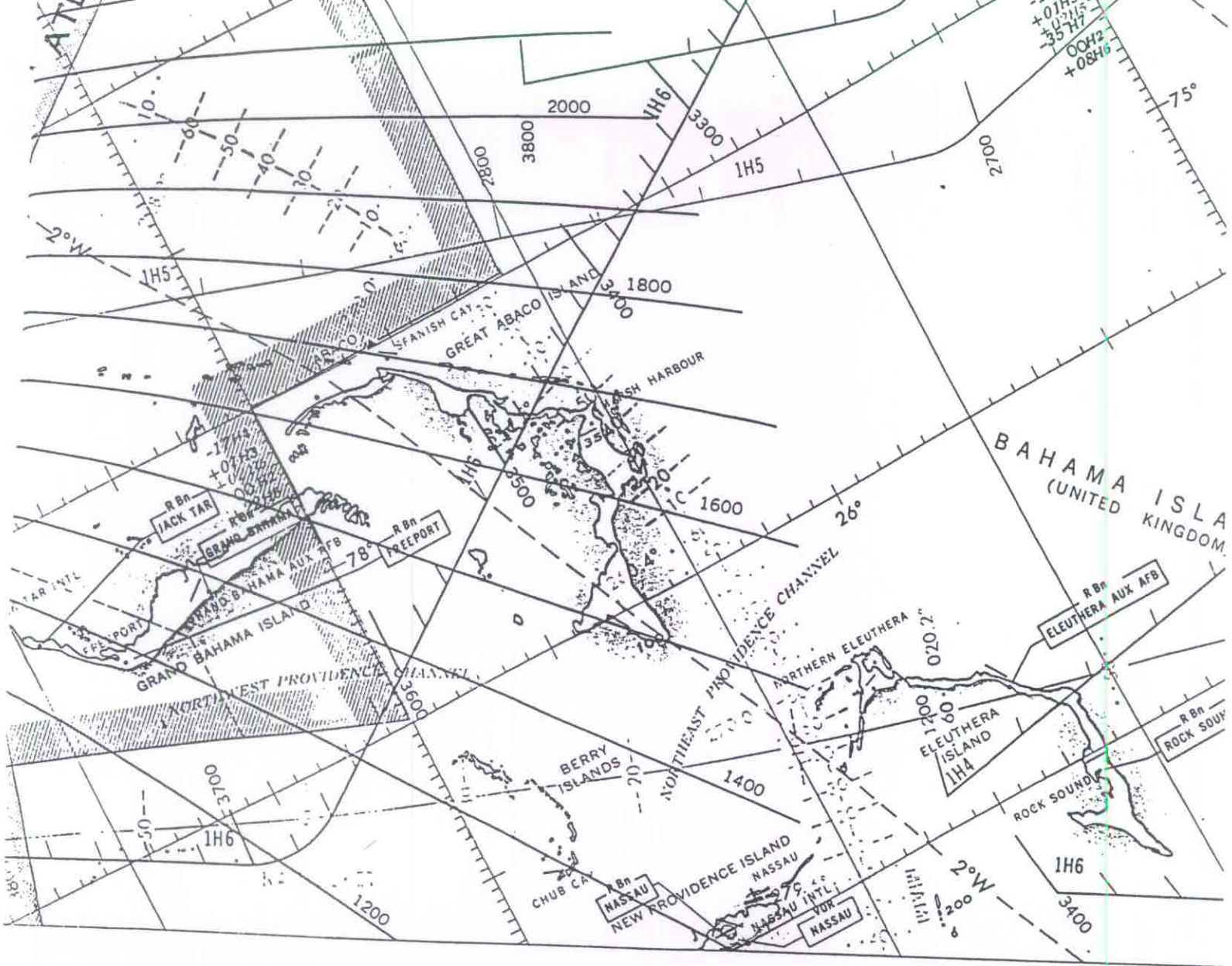
UN CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT RECEIPT

TO (Name and address) Mr. John M. Steadman Room 3E941 The Pentagon		DATE OF TRANSFER 2-25-66	GSA REGISTER NO. (TOP SECRET only) --
FROM (Name and address) Walter Robertson, Jr. Room 108 - National Archives General Services Administration		CLASSIFICATION NONE	
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SIGNATURE (Ink or indelible pencil) <i>Mary Reed</i> <small>(TOP SECRET must be signed by addressee only)</small>		Date <i>2/25/66</i>	Time <i>1645</i>

THIS COPY TO BE RETURNED PROMPTLY TO OFFICE OF SENDER

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THE ABOVE-IDENTIFIED MATTER WAS PERSONALLY RECEIVED BY ME:			
SIGNATURE OF COURIER (Ink or indelible pencil)		Date	Time



CONTINENTAL ENTRY CHART

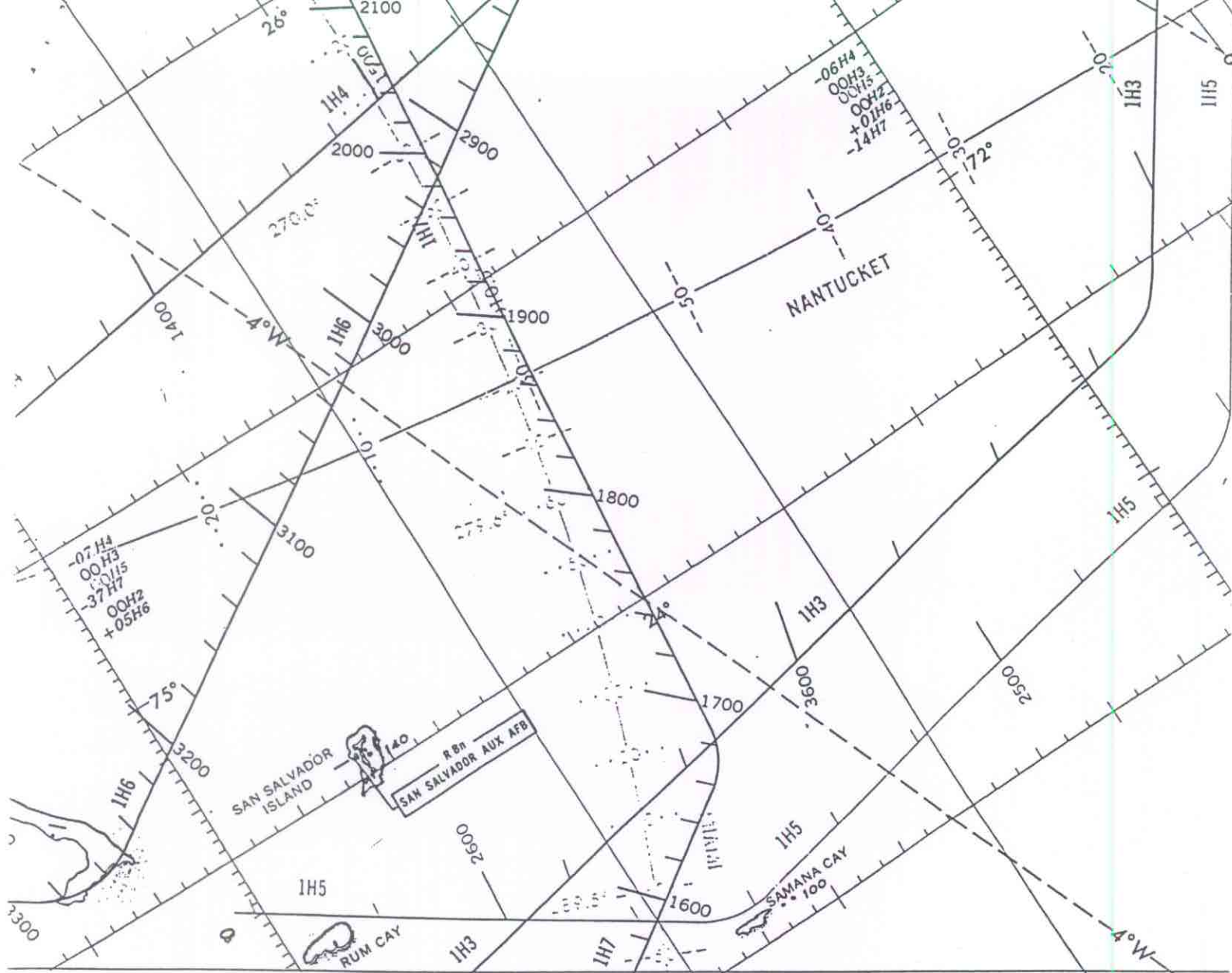
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1H2 1H3 1H4 1H5 1H6 1H7

Lithographed by ACIC 5-64



COLOR REGISTRATION GUIDE

Deviation of a color dot from the cross tick intersection indicates the amount and direction of misregistration of that specific color.

NOTE
 INFORMATION ON DEFECTS IN LORAN OPERATIONS SHALL BE FORWARDED IMMEDIATELY TO THE COMMANDER, AERONAUTICAL CHART AND INFORMATION CENTER, ST. LOUIS MO., 63118, ATTN. ACDB. AND SHALL INCLUDE ALL PERTINENT FACTS, I.E. RATES INVOLVED, WHETHER GROUND WAVE OR SKY WAVE, LOCATION WHERE DEFECT WAS OBSERVED, AND DATE OF OBSERVATION. (BLINKING IS NOT A DEFECT.)

Microsecond increments on this chart are variable. They are plotted at intervals of 20 and 100 in view of scale limitations.
 SKY WAVE CORRECTION FACTORS are indicated by + or - in same color as rate to which they apply.

EAST COAST CEC-

5th EDITION
 4th EDITION of CEC 1 is obsolete

Calendar No. 836

89TH CONGRESS }
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
No. 851

PRESERVING EVIDENCE PERTAINING TO THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

OCTOBER 4 (legislative day, OCTOBER 1), 1965.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. DIRKSEN (for Mr. EASTLAND), from the Committee on the
Judiciary, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 9545]

The Committee on the Judiciary, to which was referred the bill (H.R. 9545) providing for the acquisition and preservation by the United States of certain items of evidence pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon, without amendment, and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the proposed legislation is to authorize the acquisition and preservation by the United States of certain items of evidence pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

ANALYSIS OF THE BILL

H.R. 9545 would authorize the Attorney General to designate, by publication in the Federal Register, which items considered by the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy are required by the national interest to be acquired and preserved by the United States (secs. 1 and 2(a)). All right, title, and interest to these items would vest in the United States upon publication of the Attorney General's determination in the Federal Register (sec. 2(b)). Authority to effect such acquisition would expire 1 year after the date of enactment of this legislation (sec. 2(c)).

Under the bill, claims for just compensation must be filed within 1 year of the date of publication of the Attorney General's designation. The bill grants concurrent jurisdiction to the Court of Claims

2 PRESERVE EVIDENCE—ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

and the U.S. district courts over claims for just compensation hereunder and provides that a claimant filing in the Federal district court may request a trial by jury (sec. 3).

All items acquired pursuant to the bill are to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Administrator of General Services and preserved in accordance with rules and regulations which he may prescribe (sec. 4).

The bill provides that all items acquired by the United States hereunder shall be deemed personal property within the meaning of provisions penalizing removal or mutilation and theft, sections 2071 and 2112, title 18, United States Code (sec. 5). The bill authorizes such appropriation as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the act (sec. 6).

STATEMENT

In the course of its investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the President's Commission on the Assassination acquired a large number of items of physical evidence pertaining to the assassination and related events. The most important of these belonged to Lee Harvey Oswald and his wife. The Commission recommended that a substantial number of these items of evidence, particularly those relating to the actual assassination of the President and the murder of Patrolman J. D. Tippit, should remain in the possession of the Government. In furtherance of this objective, the Attorney General requested the introduction of the present measure.

These items include the assassination weapon, the revolver involved in the murder of Officer Tippit, among many other exhibits. The working papers, investigation reports, and transcripts of the Commission have been transmitted to the National Archives. The items of physical evidence are being retained in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The committee is persuaded that the national interest requires that the Attorney General shall be in a position to determine that any of these critical exhibits, which were considered by the President's Commission, shall be permanently retained by the United States. The committee concurs in the view expressed by the Attorney General that in years ahead allegations and theories concerning President Kennedy's assassination may abound. To eliminate questions and doubts the physical evidence should be securely preserved. A failure to do so could lead to loss, destruction, or alteration of vital evidence and in time might serve to encourage irresponsible rumors undermining public confidence in the work of the President's Commission.

The authority conferred by this legislation authorizing the acquisition and preservation of certain items of evidence considered by the President's Commission is vital in the national interest. One private party has already filed suit against the Attorney General of the United States for possession of the assassination weapon and the .38 caliber revolver involved in the death of Police Officer Tippit, claiming to have purchased all right, title, and interest in these items from Mrs. Marina N. Oswald. The Government has not yet responded to the complaint. The effect of this legislation would be to deny the plaintiff possession of these items but would afford due process of law by providing a procedure for recovering just compensation by permitting the claimant his day in court to litigate his asserted rights.

PRESERVE EVIDENCE—ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY 3

The committee believes that the need for this legislation is manifest and in the public interest, and accordingly, recommends favorable consideration of H.R. 9545, without amendment.

Attached hereto and made a part hereof is the letter from the Attorney General of the United States.

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL,
Washington, D.C., June 17, 1965.

THE VICE PRESIDENT,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. VICE PRESIDENT: Enclosed for your consideration and appropriate reference is a legislative proposal providing for the acquisition and preservation by the United States of certain items of evidence pertaining to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In its investigation of the assassination of President Kennedy, the Commission appointed by President Johnson examined numerous items of physical evidence which were used to form the basis for its report. These items included the assassination weapon, the revolver involved in the murder of Patrolman J. D. Tippit, and many other exhibits. This evidence and the investigative reports, transcripts, and other working papers of the Commission, have been officially transmitted to the National Archives by the Commission. Pending final decision as to the disposition to be made of these exhibits, the physical evidence has been retained in the custody of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Prior to the completion of its work, the Commission requested that this Department take the necessary steps to provide for the retention of the essential items of physical evidence in the possession of the U.S. Government for an indefinite period of time. After full consideration of the alternatives, I am persuaded that the national interest requires legislation which will provide a valid legal basis for the permanent retention of these critical exhibits.

In the first place, I think it is important to recognize that in the years ahead allegations and theories regarding the assassination of President Kennedy may continue to abound. This has certainly been the case abroad and, to some degree within the United States, since the publication of the Commission's report, despite the impressive documentation and presentation of the Commission's conclusions. To a considerable extent, such allegations and theories feed on secrecy and uncertainty, as is demonstrated, I believe, by the historical literature during the past 100 years relating to the assassination of President Lincoln. We should securely preserve the physical evidence to eliminate questions and doubts. In my judgment, a failure to retain the critical physical exhibits and the resultant possibility of their loss, destruction, or alteration will serve to encourage irresponsible rumors and allegations designed to destroy the widespread public confidence in the work and conclusions of the President's Commission.

Furthermore, retention of these items would permit an accurate and complete reassessment of the conclusions of the President's Commission if at any time in the future this was considered desirable. Many of the items, such as the weapons, cartridges, and various documents, were the subject of testimony before the Commission,

4 PRESERVE EVIDENCE—ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

during the course of which expert and other witnesses testified about their vital characteristics, ownership, use, and relationship to the assassination.

For these reasons, I am submitting the enclosed measure which would establish a procedure under which selected items of evidence could be retained and protected from dispersal and exploitation. The proposed legislation would authorize the Attorney General to determine which of the items considered by the President's Commission are required by the national interest to be acquired and preserved by the United States. When the Attorney General makes a determination that an item should be acquired, all right and title to it would be vested in the United States upon the filing of his determination with the Office of the Federal Register for publication in the Federal Register. The Attorney General's acquisition authority would expire 1 year after the enactment of the proposed legislation, and title to only those items described in determinations filed with the Office of the Federal Register within such 1-year period would vest in the United States. The Court of Claims would be granted exclusive jurisdiction over claims for just compensation for any item acquired by the United States pursuant to the procedure proposed in the legislation.

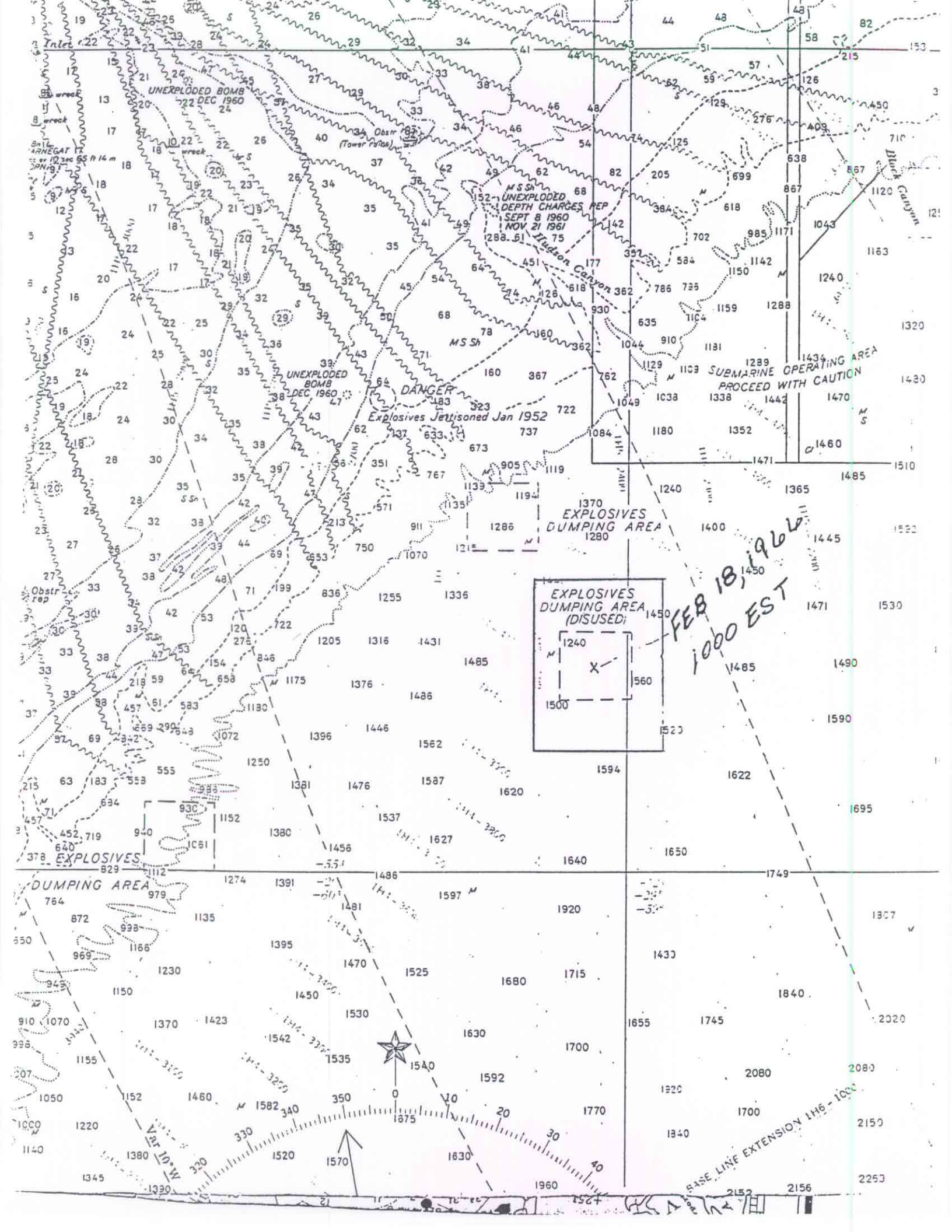
In order to meet the requirements of the national interest as indicated, I urge the early and favorable consideration of the enclosed proposal.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there is no objection to the submission of this legislation from the standpoint of the administration's program.

Sincerely,

NICHOLAS DEB. KATZENBACH,
Attorney General.

○





ATLANTIC COAST

CAPE SABLE TO CAPE HATTERAS

(For offshore navigation only)

Mercator Projection

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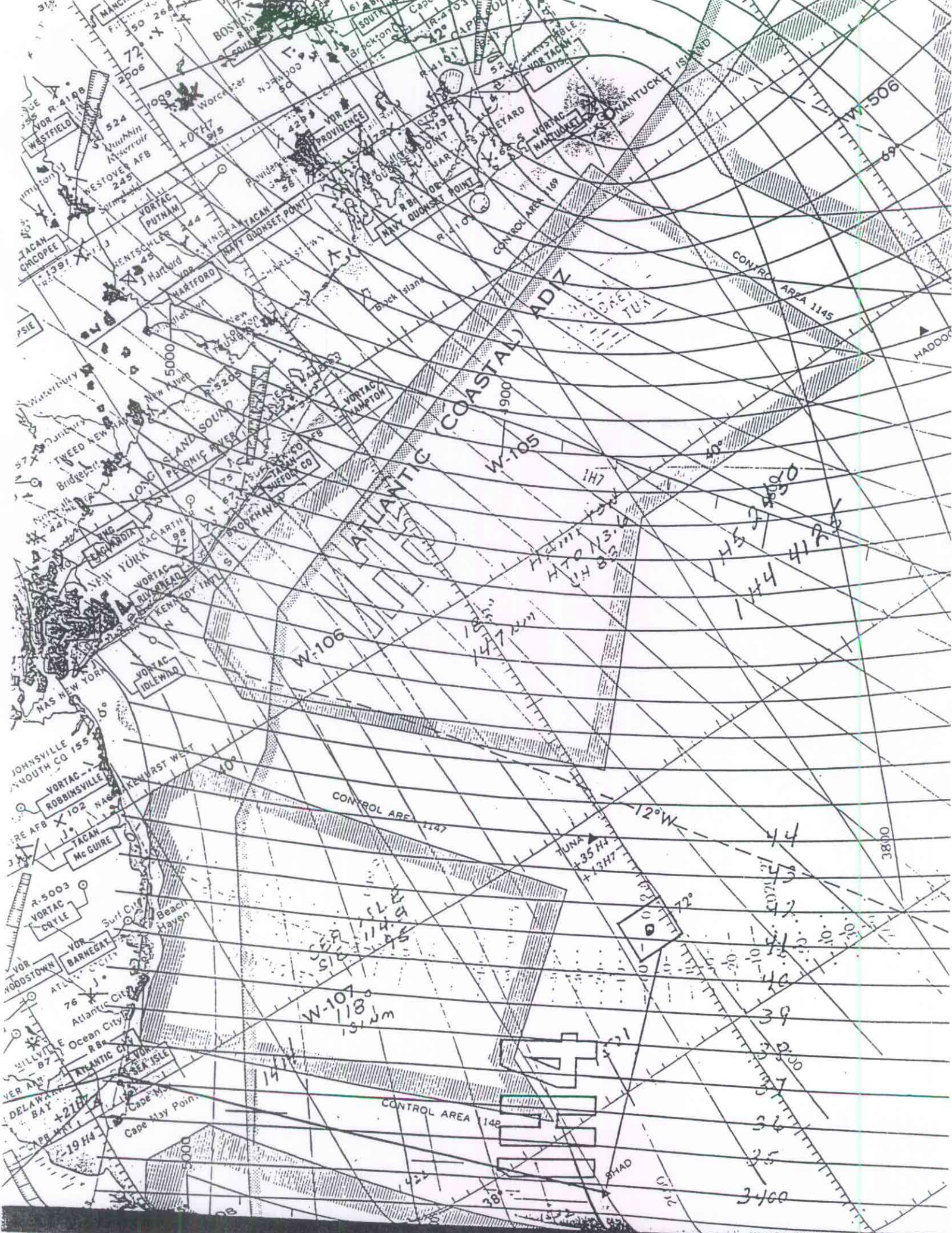
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