Extent

41 folders, approximately 2,690 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records related to the sharp rise in the number of reported arson attacks on the nation’s houses of worship and the formation of the National Church Arson Task Force (NCATF). It contains correspondence between members of the Task Force, correspondence with the White House and various pastors and community leaders, Task Force meeting minutes, notes, memoranda, speeches, publications and official reports in both draft and final form. This collection also includes email that contains correspondence concerning the NCATF, information related to meetings, schedules, weekly reports and discussion of the administration’s position concerning the creation of the NCATF.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2015-0532-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. In early 1996, federal officials detected a sharp rise in the number of reported arson attacks on the nation’s houses of worship, especially African-American churches in the South. This trend troubled law enforcement agencies and stirred the Nation’s conscience. In June 1996, President Clinton formed the National Church Arson Task Force (NCATF), making the investigation of these fires and the swift prosecution of the arsonists a top priority. The President charged the NCATF with a three prong strategy: 1) identify and prosecute the arsonists; 2) help communities rebuild the burned churches; and 3) offer local law enforcement assistance in preventing more fires. The NCATF in its four years of operation (1996-2000) investigated 827 cases of arson, bombing or other attacks on houses of worship throughout the country. The U.S. Congress responded to the rise in Church arson attacks with the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996 which granted federal

prosecutors greater power in pursuing burnings and desecrations at houses of worship. Materials responsive to this FOIA request include correspondence between members of the Task Force, correspondence with the White House and various pastors and community leaders, Task Force meeting minutes, notes, memoranda, speeches, publications and official reports in both draft and final form. Email from the Automated Records Management System contain correspondence concerning the NCATF. Responsive email includes information related to meetings, schedules, weekly reports and discussion of the administration’s position concerning the creation of the NCATF.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in these collection areas— Clinton Presidential Records: White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) Subject files, Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files, Clinton Presidential Records: Automated Records Management System [Email], Clinton Presidential Records: Tape Restoration Project [Email]. The White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) contains a variety of series created to organize and track documents and correspondence. The WHORM Subject file was compiled by the White House Office of Records Management and is a series of categories designated by a letter/number combination. Staff and Office files were maintained at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and document all levels of administration activity. WHORM files are processed at the document level; whereas, Staff and Office files are processed at the folder level, that is, individual documents are not selected and removed from a folder for processing. While this method maintains folder integrity, it frequently results in the incidental processing of documents that are not wholly responsive to the subject area. The Automated Records Management System (ARMS) is a database that contains email records of the Executive Office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential email. The ARMS database is comprised of six sub-series of email records called "buckets." The buckets generally represent a specific White House

office. The buckets are titled: NPR for National Performance Review, OPD for Office of Policy Development, POTUS for President of the United States, WHO for White House Office, CEA for Council of Economic Advisers, and Default for emails not associated with an office. The NPR bucket contains email created or received by an individual with a National Performance Review (NPR) White House user account. The OPD bucket contains email created or received by an individual with an Office of Policy Development (OPD) White House user account. The POTUS bucket was designated for email created and received by the President of the United States (POTUS). Please note that President Clinton never used his POTUS White House user account to send the few emails he wrote while in office. The WHO bucket contains email created or received by individual with an Executive Office of the President White House user account not identified as CEA, NPR, or OPD. The CEA bucket contains email created or received by an individual with a Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) White House user account. The Default bucket contains email created or received by unknown or un-recognized email accounts. Email found within the Default bucket often includes email created or received by offices or individuals outside the Executive Office of the President. ARMS email are arranged by topic, there-under by bucket, and there-under chronologically by creation date. The Tape Restoration Project (TRP) is a database consisting of restored emails from the Automated Records Management System (ARMS) from July 1994 through June of 2000. The TRP is a database that contains email records of the Executive Office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential record email. The TRP database is comprised of the same six sub-series of email as in ARMS. TRP email are arranged by topic, there-under by bucket, and there-under chronologically by creation date. FOIA 2015-0532-F includes WHORM records from these subject codes: FG258 Federal Government – Task Force FG331 Federal Government – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) RM Religious Matters SP400 Speeches, Radio Addresses.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Organization Names

United States. National Church Arson Task Force

Topical Subjects

Church buildings
Arson

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2015. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2015-12-31

Container List

View all digitized files in the National Archives Catalog (NAC)

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2015-0532-F:

Box 1
Clinton Presidential Records: WHORM: Subject File

Category	**Case Number**
FG258	408537
FG331	203811
RM	180390SS
RM	181066
SP400	201810SS

Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files
Cabinet Affairs
Jennings, Jon
Arson Task Force [OA/ID 13612]
McGuire, Anne
Church Arson [OA/ID 13172]
Churches [1] [OA/ID 13172]
Churches [2] [OA/ID 13172]
Chief of Staff
Emanuel, Rahm
[National Church Arson Task Force – Interim Report for the President – January 1997] [loose] [OA/ID 12893]
Domestic Policy Council
Benos, Deanne
National Church Arson Task Force [OA/ID 103568]
National Church Arson Task Force First Year Report for the President, June 1997 [OA/ID 103568]
Bueno, Irene
Arson Report 1999 [OA/ID 17176]
Church Arson [OA/ID 17176]

Freedman, Tom
Church Arsons [OA/ID 17541]
Kullman, Karin
Church Arson Event, Rose Garden, July 2, 1996: Church Arson Event 7/2/96 [OA/ID 14401]
Liu, Eric
Civil Rights – Church Arson [OA/ID 103883]

Box 2
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files (continued)
Shimabukuro, Leanne
Crime: Church Arsons [OA/ID 21297]
National Church Arson Task Force: Third Year Report for the President January 2000 [publication] [OA/ID 23177]
Public Liaison
Johnson, Ben
[National Church Arson Task Force – 1996] [publication] [OA/ID 13366]
McAfee, Flo
Arson Churches [OA/ID 11052]
National Church Arson Task Force [OA/ID 11052]
Speechwriting
Edmonds, Terry
7-10-96 Church Arson Prev. Act White House [1] [OA/ID 10981]
7-10-96 Church Arson Prev. Act White House [2] [OA/ID 10981]
Church Burning Task Force [OA/ID 10981]

Box 3
Clinton Presidential Records: Automated Records Management System [Email]
OPD [OA/ID 250000]
[Church Arson]
[05/10/1996 – 10/26/1998]
[12/27/1999 – 06/12/2000]
WHO [OA/ID 500000]
[Church Arson]

[04/08/1996 – 06/11/1996]
[06/11/1996 – 06/17/1996]
[06/17/1996 – 06/19/1996]
[06/19/1996 – 06/28/1996]
[07/01/1996 – 07/10/1996]

Box 4
[07/10/1996 – 07/31/1996]
[07/31/1996 – 04/11/1997]
[04/17/1997 – 06/09/1997]
[06/09/1997 – 03/16/2000]
[05/02/2000 – 01/18/2001]
Default [OA/ID 1100000]
[Church Arson]
[03/28/1996 – 07/11/1996]
[07/12/1996 – 10/27/1997]
Clinton Presidential Records: Tape Restoration Project [Email]
WHO [OA/ID 500000]
[Church Arson]
[06/09/1997 – 03/10/1998]
Clinton Presidential Records: Tape Restoration Project [Email]
Default [OA/ID 1100000]
[Church Arson]
[06/13/1996 – 05/13/1997]

Content Available Online