

**DECLASSIFICATION AT THE DWIGHT D.
EISENHOWER LIBRARY**
By David Haight

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, which opened in 1966, significantly expanded its declassification program in 1972, when President Richard Nixon signed Executive Order 11652, “Classification and Declassification of National Security Information and Material.” EO 11652 established the researcher-initiated mandatory declassification review program and called for the systematic review of materials over 30 years old. Both mandatory and systematic declassification review continue at the Eisenhower Library.¹ In 1995, however, President Bill Clinton approved Executive Order 12958, which led to major changes in the declassification process. Although recently amended, this order still governs national security information.

Section 3.4(a) of EO 12958 set April 2000 as the deadline for accomplishing the review of all classified information over twenty-five years old held by the National Archives and the presidential libraries.² In response to this mandate, the Central Intelligence Agency, in cooperation with the National Archives and the presidential libraries, developed the Remote Archive Capture (RAC) program. The RAC program sent teams of contract personnel to the libraries holding classified documents. They scanned the documents onto disks, which were then taken to a secure location in the Washington, D.C. area for review by the CIA and other agencies.³

In 1995 the National Security Council (NSC) decided to delegate authority for the

¹ For details of the Eisenhower Library’s declassification programs from 1972 to 1989 see David Haight, “Declassification of Presidential Papers: The Eisenhower Library’s Experience,” *Provenance* 7 (Fall, 1989), 33-53.

² President Bush’s Executive Order 13292 moved the declassification deadline date to December 31, 2006, giving the agencies, including the National Archives, more time to review twenty-five-year-old materials.

³ Reporting data on file in Declassification Office, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.

declassification of most White House and NSC documents to archivists at the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Libraries, although it excluded some specific categories of documents. Declassification authority was particularly important for the Eisenhower Library because White House and NSC materials constitute over 50 percent of the library's classified holdings. The library now takes declassification action on requests for most White House and NSC documents. Declassification review archivists identify various agency equities and apply available agency guidelines carefully.⁴ They also use publications such as the Department of State's Foreign Relations of the United States series and review precedents set by mandatory review actions to determine the continuing sensitivity of certain topics.⁵

Despite its shortcomings, mandatory review remains the most reliable and productive avenue for obtaining declassification review of many high-level documents in which a number of agencies have equity interests. From 1977 to June 2003 the mandatory review program totally or partially declassified almost 175,000 pages, including most of the NSC Summaries of Discussion, the White House Staff Secretary's Memoranda of Conferences with the President, and countless other high-level documents requiring intense review, usually by more than one agency.⁶ Systematic review continues at the library, but with better guidance and a stronger mandate for action. In launching its systematic declassification review of the library's classified holdings in late 1995, the staff was determined to declassify as much as possible onsite while fulfilling its mandate to identify documents to be scanned for the RAC program and keeping

⁴ Memorandum, Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, to Trudy H. Peterson, Acting Archivist of the United States, January 30, 1995, Files of Eisenhower Library Declassification Office.

⁵ See David Haight, "The Foreign Relations of the United States Series and Research at the Eisenhower Library", SHAFR Newsletter 28 (June 1997), 1-19, for an account of the library staff's use of the FRUS volumes in declassification and reference work.

⁶ Ibid.

records of withheld material and agencies of primary subject matter interest so that arrangements could be made with these agencies to obtain declassification review of withheld material.

Between late 1995 and April 2003 the staff declassified onsite through systematic review 206,694 pages (61 percent of reviewed material), while withholding as too sensitive to declassify per guidelines 134,070 pages (39 percent).⁷ Although the declassified totals include numerous transmittal letters and routine memoranda, they also contain a large volume of substantive high-level documentation from World War II through the Eisenhower presidency and into the early 1970s.

Equipped with more specific guidelines concerning the United Kingdom, the staff declassified much of the correspondence between Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and President Eisenhower, except for a few letters dealing with intelligence or nuclear matters. The staff also declassified correspondence and memoranda concerning most Western European countries, the Soviet Union, and many Asian, Latin American and African countries, and released numerous previously withheld foreign government documents. Much documentation pertaining to diplomacy during the Eisenhower administration was opened between 1996 and 2003.

A significant quantity of material pertaining to the Eisenhower administration's national security machinery has also been declassified, including memoranda and letters concerning the National Security Council and minutes from meetings of the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB). The OCB was an arm of the NSC that coordinates and reports on the implementation of NSC policy papers, studies specific projects, gathers intelligence, and produces papers on the psychological and public relations impact of various government programs. OCB minutes from

⁷ Ibid.

the years 1953 through 1961 have now, with scattered exceptions, been declassified, along with most of a file of weekly summaries of NSC, Planning Board and OCB activities for the period between 1957 and 1961 and large numbers of memoranda of OCB working group meetings on specific topics. Although a few scholars have produced useful studies of Eisenhower's National Security Council, much research needs to be done on the OCB and key members of Eisenhower's national security team such as the White House staff secretary and the special assistant for national security affairs, particularly in light of the recently declassified material.⁸

The Operations Coordinating Board generated a large volume of documentation on U.S. cultural, diplomatic, and psychological and public relations actions intended to exert a positive influence on developments in many countries, particularly in Asia and Latin America. The OCB conducted studies of special topics such as Buddhism in Southeast Asia.⁹ It coordinated the Overseas Internal Security Program, conducted pursuant to NSC Action No.1290, Paragraph D (the program was often called the 1290-d program), involving U.S. military assistance to more than two dozen countries located primarily in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.¹⁰ Plans for two organizations intended to help wage the Cold War but never implemented, the Volunteer Freedom Corps (Europe) and the International Volunteer Air Corps (Southeast

⁸ See, for example, Phillip G. Henderson, "Advice and Decision: The Eisenhower National Security Council Reappraised," in The Presidency and National Security Policy, ed. R. Gordon Hoxie, vol. 5 (New York, 1984), 153-186; and Anna Kasten Nelson, "The 'Top of Policy Hill': President Eisenhower and the National Security Council," Diplomatic History 7 (Fall 1983), 307-325.

⁹ While the Library holds minutes of OCB meetings for the entire Eisenhower administration and other OCB-related documentation for the later years of the administration, the OCB Central Files Series in the Eisenhower Library, consisting of 129 archives boxes, ends around May 1957. The remainder of the OCB Central Files from June 1957 to January 1961 is part of Record Group 273, Records of the National Security Council, in the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. Inquiries should be sent to the reference staff at Archives II concerning the availability of these OCB materials.

¹⁰ The record of action taken at the 229th Meeting of the NSC, December 21, 1954, on NSC 5440, "Review of Basic National Security Policy" included in Paragraph D the following language: "[The Council] Requested the Operations Coordinating Board to present to the Council a report on the status and adequacy of the current program to develop constabulary forces to maintain internal security and to destroy the effectiveness of the Communist apparatus in free world countries vulnerable to communist subversion." Record of Actions by the National Security

Asia) are also documented in the OCB Central Files.¹¹ The OCB files are supplemented by the rich volume of recently declassified material on foreign economic policy, cultural diplomacy, international information and psychological warfare found in the Records of the President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad (Sprague Committee) and in several other collections in our holdings.

World War II material has also been declassified during these last few years. Highlights include two thousand pages pertaining to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the British Special Operations Executive, and European resistance movements in a microfilm collection of records from the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. The staff has also declassified several hundred pages documenting Claude Boillot's work with the French Resistance and his efforts to collect intelligence on Germany while working with the British Secret Service during the war. The Papers of Paul Sturman, who worked for the Foreign Nationalities Division of the Office of War Information (OWI), contain recently opened information on Slavic groups in the United States, while the Papers of Bernard Yarrow, a special assistant to OSS director William Donovan, document efforts to sustain a Yugoslav government in exile under King Peter, with Ivan Subasic, the Ban of Croatia, as prime minister (Project SHEPHERD).¹²

Council at its Two Hundred and Twenty Ninth Meeting, December 21, 1954, File Folder: Record of Actions by NSC 1954 (4), Box 1, NSC Series, Dwight D. Eisenhower's Papers as President (Ann Whitman File).

¹¹ See H.W. Brands, Jr. "A Cold War Foreign Legion? The Eisenhower Administration and the Volunteer Freedom Corps," *Military Affairs* 52 (January 1988), 7-11. Additional documentation on the Volunteer Freedom Corps has been declassified in the library's holdings within the last few years.

¹² Declassification of more than two thousand pages of OSS-originated documents in the Papers of Bernard Yarrow was accomplished by copying this material, submitting it to the staff of the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group (IWG) at Archives II in College Park, Maryland. The IWG, in turn, obtained CIA review of this documentation. The IWG was established under legislative mandate to achieve declassification of documentary records of war crimes committed by Nazi Germany and the Japanese Imperial Government during World War II. The IWG accomplished the declassification of major files of OSS material in the

The Eisenhower Library also holds material covering the 1960s and even the 1970s. Not all of this material required declassification, although much of it did. Diplomatic and social historians may find Arthur Flemming's files on his work with the World Council of Churches interesting, as they reflect religious opposition to the Vietnam War and touch upon many social issues of the 1960s. Herbert Brownell, President Eisenhower's attorney general, retained a file documenting his service for President Richard Nixon as special ambassador responsible for negotiating a treaty with Mexico to control salinity in the Colorado River in 1972-73. A few hundred pages of material concerning this diplomatic and environmental problem in U.S.-Mexican relations were declassified through mandatory and systematic review. Staff also declassified a few hundred pages of diplomatic messages, memoranda and reports concerning China, Burma, Japan and Southeast Asia in the early 1970s in the Papers of Ambassador David Osborn. This includes material on President Nixon's trip to China in 1972.

The Papers of Lauris Norstad merit special mention. General Lauris Norstad is best known for his service as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) from 1956 to 1962. His papers are a rich source of information on events, issues and personalities involved in Western European defense. When the library received this collection in the mid-1980s it contained an estimated forty thousand pages of classified documentation, most of which related to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Berlin, U.S. military strategy in Europe, nuclear matters, medium range ballistic missile and intermediate range ballistic missile systems, and relations among the NATO member nations. Many items in his papers bear NATO security classification markings and are not reviewable under guidelines. NATO issued guidelines to cover many of its files through

National Archives. Declassification of the Bernard Yarrow Papers represents the major impact of the IWG's work on the Eisenhower Library's classified holdings.

1958 but specifically excluded materials originated by SHAPE and other military commands. The library continues to rely heavily on the mandatory review process for such material and has sent requests covering many SHAPE documents to agencies within the government (typically State and Defense, and occasionally others) but also to SHAPE for review, while concurrently applying systematic review guidelines where it is possible to do so. The results of the mandatory and systematic reviews have been mixed at best. While some high-level documentation has been declassified (Berlin, for example, has been an area of success), numerous items on certain topics, particularly those involving nuclear strategy, continue to be denied in full or heavily redacted. At present the staff estimates that at least twenty thousand pages remain classified in the Lauris Norstad Papers. Many scholars may find his pre-SACEUR files useful, and General Norstad's World War II files have been fully declassified, as have all of his materials dated prior to 1950. However, scholars interested in studying the diplomatic and military details of Western European defense during Norstad's tenure as SACEUR should be prepared not only for rewards but for frustration. The Norstad Papers will pose declassification problems for years to come.

Intelligence and nuclear weapons-related documentation pose the greatest declassification problems at the Eisenhower Library. Much intelligence information is sensitive and will likely remain so for many years. Nevertheless, the library has had significant declassification success for certain types of intelligence documentation. Research on many facets of intelligence, including both its administrative and organizational aspects and President Eisenhower's use of it, is now feasible, as is research on World War II. The Joint Study Group Report on Foreign Intelligence Activities of the United States Government, dated December 15, 1960, was largely declassified, with a modest number of redactions. This document, signed by Lyman Kirkpatrick, contains recommendations on increasing the effectiveness of U.S. government intelligence

collection.¹³ Recent declassification actions have also released documents pertaining to the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities (PBCFIA). Even with redactions certain of these items provide useful insights into the intelligence oversight process.¹⁴

As for operational matters, many covert programs will remain under wraps for years to come. With the exception of Cuba, the U.S. government is releasing little in the library's holdings on covert operations matters concerning specific countries. On the other hand, more is being opened on overhead, peripheral and outer space reconnaissance, mainly as a result of requests submitted by persistent scholars willing to work through the time-consuming mandatory review process. Interesting data on the CORONA satellite reconnaissance project, the U-2 program and even the reconnaissance missions conducted along the periphery of the Soviet Union have been released, including a recent, partially declassified case file with information on U-2 vulnerability testing, the Urals and Tyura Tam as intercontinental ballistic missile intelligence targets, Project CORONA and maps marked with U-2 routes taken across the Soviet Union.¹⁵

We expect declassification of nuclear weapons information to be difficult indefinitely, regardless of the age of the information. The passage of the Kyl Amendment (Section 3161 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 1999, approved in October 1998,) indicates a

¹³ The Joint Study Group Report on Foreign Intelligence Activities of the United States Government, 15, December 1960, File Folder: Papers received since January 10, 1961 (3), Box 1, Papers Received Since January 10, 1961 Series, Records of the White House Office of the Special Assistant For National Security Affairs.

¹⁴ See for example Memorandum of a Special Meeting in the President's Office, January 17, 1957, in which the board discussed with the president and the statutory members of the National Security Council the semi-annual report by the PBCFIA. This particular discussion covered coordination, collection, costs, administering the **covert operations program, the National Security Agency**, the need to break Soviet codes and even the heavy U.S. reliance on British intelligence during the early years of World War II. File Folder: President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, First Report to the President, December 1956-August 1958 (1), Box 7, NSC Series, Subject Subseries, Records of the White House Office of the Special Assistant For National Security Affairs.

¹⁵ File of documents regarding Project ____ (title not declassified) but concerning U-2 testing and intelligence gathering targets, maps, and memoranda concerning Project CORONA, ca. 1958-1959, File Folders: Intelligence Matters, (1)-(19), Box 15, Subject Series, Alphabetical Subseries, Records of the White House Staff Secretary.

more restrictive policy on release of this kind of information. This amendment required the Department of Energy and the Archivist of the United States to develop a plan to guard against the inadvertent release of records containing restricted and formerly restricted data. Pursuant to this objective Department of Energy representatives have re-reviewed many previously released records in the National Archives and in presidential libraries, including the Eisenhower Library. So far, the impact has not been as negative for the library as it could have been, but in all likelihood any nuclear weapons-related documents not yet reviewed will be subjected to closer scrutiny by agency personnel.

The library staff faces much unfinished declassification business. Thousands of pages scanned for RAC are still pending action. Plans are currently being made to seek agency assistance in declassifying at least portions of the 134,000 pages of multiple agency equity documents set aside during the library's systematic review.¹⁶ The library also holds a few bodies of security-classified material that are more recent in origin and involve complex issues. These too, will require agency assistance. The Papers of Robert Anderson, secretary of the treasury from 1958 to January 1961, document Anderson's work as special ambassador charged with negotiating a Panama Canal treaty from 1963 to 1974. This file contains a few thousand pages of State Department and White House cables, memoranda, memoranda of conversations, reports and intelligence data. The personal papers of Gerard C. Smith include a file of memoranda and notes regarding nuclear nonproliferation issues during the Jimmy Carter administration. On a more positive note, the staff is currently processing the Papers of Edward Lilly, historian for the OWI and later for the Joint Chiefs of Staff during World War II and the postwar years. Dr. Lilly's files contain a rich body of information on the OWI, the Psychological Strategy Board

¹⁶ Much of this withheld material was identified for RAC and was consequently scanned for the program. This figure is therefore expected to be lower when the RAC review results are completed.

and other psychological warfare matters during World War II and the Cold War. Review of the World War II material is ongoing, and to date virtually all of it is being declassified.

Declassification at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library will continue for many years to come. The library staff expects that a solid core of documentation, perhaps fifty to seventy-five thousand pages, will be withheld following mandatory, systematic and/or RAC review and will remain classified for years to come. Some of these materials can accurately be termed “daisy documents,” because all of us are likely to be “pushing up daisies” before they will be released. But even as the library staff winds down the intensive review begun in late 1995, scholars visiting the library will benefit from the cumulative results of their efforts as well as the results of actions taken on mandatory declassification requests and continuing returns from the RAC program. Research is now feasible at the Eisenhower Library on most subjects of interest to historians, including those relating to intelligence, nuclear weapons, and U.S. relations with NATO. Many subjects that are not as popular, such as environmental, organizational and cultural topics and various other issues from the 1960s and World War II, can also be studied fruitfully at the Eisenhower Library. Some subject areas, while perhaps not totally off limits, will remain difficult for years to come. Examples include United States covert operations, specifics on the design, manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons, specifics on communications intelligence and on cryptanalysis, and many details and concepts involving the continuity of government.

The library staff encourages the public, including not only established scholars but beginning students, to use its resources. We urge prospective researchers to contact the library so that our staff can provide advice on the availability of materials on specified topics, discuss classification and any other access problems, and explain procedures for conducting research in

our holdings. Anyone interested in knowing more about the holdings of the Dwight D.

Eisenhower Library should contact the library at:

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We recommend that prospective users examine the library's website. This site includes general information on research procedures, hours of operation, reproduction fees, travel, lists of local dining and lodging facilities, a research application, and the texts of finding aids to many of our major collections of presidential papers, White House office files and personal papers. These finding aids can be searched individually online by use of key words.

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