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13 June 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director, Office of Legislative Liaison

FROM: [redacted] STAT
Director of Information Services

SUBJECT: Declassification of OSS Records

1. After our telephone conversation regarding the attached letter from the DCI to Senator Durenberger, a member of my staff discussed the first paragraph of the letter with the Chief of the Modern Military Headquarters Branch, National Archives and Records Service (NARS). This branch is the custodian of the OSS records that have been accessioned by NARS. Since the possibility exists that the information in this letter will appear in the press, he is concerned that some of the statements might raise false expectations and result in unfavorable publicity at a later date if the public felt they were misled. For example, of the approximately 200 feet of OSS records accessioned by NARS, only about 150 feet will be opened to public review. The rest will be withheld because they contain foreign government or other sensitive information. This equates to about 25% being withheld. In addition, the 150 feet of records will be reveiwed for privacy concerns before they will be shown to the public. The description of the information included in the records could also be misleading because some of the records that sound the most interesting could contain foreign government or other sensitive information and so be withheld.

2. For these reasons, I would recommend that you substitute the paragraph below for your first paragraph. The changes made to the number of feet of additional records to be transferred and the description of the records that will be opened to the public were taken from the NARS News Notes announcing the opening of this collection.

"Because of your previously expressed desire to make more declassified material available to historians, I know that you would be interested in learning that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has now transferred the first set, consisting of about 200 feet, of Office of Strategic Services (OSS) operational records to the National Archives who accessioned and opened them for public review on 11 June 1984. This is the first increment of approximately 2000 or more feet that will be transferred over the next year. The National Archives will open each succeeding increment to the public as they complete their standard archival processing. The types of records included in this initial group are records from the History Office, Foreign Nationalities Branch, and the Operations Group Command, war diaries of the London field office, administrative files, records on secret intelligence operations, and scattered records from the Office of the Director of OSS. These records will provide serious historians and others interested in World War II intelligence operations with additional information on that period in our history."

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3. I share your concern about the status of the FOIA relief bill, but I feel that unless the language in the first paragraph of the attached letter is changed, it has the potential to backfire against the Agency.

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