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2 October 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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SUBJECT: Visit to the Agency Archives and Records Center by Mr. [REDACTED]

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1. On Wednesday, 2 October 1968, at 8:30 a.m. I met Mr. [REDACTED] at Headquarters and he drove us to [REDACTED]. We returned at 3:00 p.m.

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2. Enroute we discussed, among other things, the Agency Records Program, the early Management Staff, and the current purge of records at the Agency Archives and Records Center. He said he was going to the Center to examine the records of the Inspector General's office. He realized they had only 32 cubic feet in storage, but he felt they would be expected to review them although the space savings would be slight. He felt most of their Case Files could be summarized to dispose of the bulk and retain the summary at the office in headquarters. He felt Mr. Stewart would not agree to this disposal. Mr. [REDACTED] felt the IG Surveys should be retained as is. I suggested microfilming both IG Cases and Surveys. He did not comment on that idea.

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3. At the Center we met and talked briefly with Mr. [REDACTED] who had been there Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning reviewing the DCI records. He said he only got through one box and felt it would take years to review the 62 on hand. He left at 10:30 for a meeting with Col. White.

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4. Mr. [REDACTED] and the Records Center Chief, Mr. [REDACTED], talked at length about records in storage and those identified for disposal. Mr. [REDACTED] said he had come down for two reasons:

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a. To find out who from the office should come to the Records Management Conference on 22 October. Should it be Mr. [REDACTED] or Mr. Stewart?

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b. "What was [REDACTED] stirred up about? Were we destroying records we shouldn't? Mr. [REDACTED] had recently visited Mr. Stewart and seemed concerned that valuable records will be destroyed in this purge."

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5. I answered the first question that the Conference was concerned with Automation and Microfilming and was aimed to demonstrate new ways to store the records left after the purge. The current IG Records Officer was Secretary [redacted] and she should attend. But I did suggest that office needed a higher grade professional to initiate new systems and procedures for IG records. They should appoint one of the Junior Officers to the Records Officer position.

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6. For the second question Mr. [redacted] provided examples of records disposal problems and an explanation of Mr. [redacted] visit last Wednesday. (September 25) [redacted] his latest problem case I had not yet heard about. It was an FI Case File from a box just ordered destroyed. It was Mr. Gordon Stewart's file on the "Exploitation of the Krushchev Speech attacking Stalin." The file had the source document, several valuable letters to and from foreign allies on the subject with copies of related published documents. Mr. [redacted] acknowledged the file's value and wondered who the Office of Record should be or was for this. Mr. [redacted] asked if he ought to destroy this box of files as requested or inquire whether a record file existed elsewhere.

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7. The discussion went from this specific example to the general problem Agencywide. Several offices and the Historical Staff have requested Mr. [redacted] to double check the boxes enroute to the incinerator. Dr. [redacted] asked him to review DDP records ordered destroyed. [redacted] has questioned many over the past few years and referred the boxes of records back to the office that ordered the destruction. In most cases they agreed that the identified records were valuable and must be retained as permanent records in the Agency Archives. Four Records Officers, Logistics, Contacts, Elint, and DDP, have complained to me that [redacted] was not following their orders. Mr. [redacted] of the Historical Staff has acknowledged finding some 40 historical documents in boxes [redacted] intercepted and referred to him. These developments were explained and illustrated to Mr. [redacted]

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8. We explained various cases to Mr. [redacted] and said we expected complaints because the Offices feel the records belong to them. Their position is that they can dispose of anything produced in their offices. Mr. [redacted] pointed out the records belong to the Agency and are part of the Director's responsibility under the law that requires an Agency Head to "make and keep records of his organization, functions, procedures, policies, and products." Copies of this law were shown to Mr. [redacted] as they had been to Mr. [redacted]. The government manual of scheduled records retention periods governing our Agency records was also provided to Mr. [redacted] (Mr. [redacted] had expressed concern that the Director could be embarrassed if we violated this schedule and he was someday asked to produce a document required by this government schedule.) Mr. [redacted] was non comittal but did express surprise that no records by any field station chief were in the Records Center.

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25X1A9a 9. I explained to Mr. [redacted] as I had to Mr. [redacted] that Mr. [redacted] our Staff liaison with National Archives, had met with [redacted] and me to review this problem frequently in recent months. I had requested Mr. [redacted] to collect specific examples and send them to me with his findings. So far he has assembled four groups for my study and I have contacted the offices concerned. Copies of these examples had been shown to Mr. [redacted] and may well have been the motivation for his visit to Mr. Stewart.

25X1A9a 10. Mr. [redacted] and I explained to Mr. [redacted] that last year the Records Center destroyed 11,000 cubic feet of useless, obsolete records as scheduled. Mr. [redacted] has a backlog of about 400 boxes of questionable material enroute to the incinerator. It will be destroyed eventually as requested unless someone provides an official stop order. He stakes his Archivist reputation and twenty years of work with records that these records are of important historical, and legal value to the Agency and should be retained in the Archives. At present neither he nor this Staff have the authority to countermand a statement about its records made by an Agency component regardless of the degree of competence in that statement. The records policy continues to be that expressed by Col. White: Purge all useless material from the Center. Preserve the historical and legally required records. The published rules and standards provided by the Archivist of the United States are the yardsticks we use to keep the valuable and dispose of the obsolete.

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25X1A9a 11. At lunch time Mr. [redacted] and I briefly visited [redacted] in his office. Before we left, Mr. [redacted] escorted Mr. [redacted] on a tour of the Records Center storage and work areas. On the return to headquarters Mr. [redacted] said the records problems look to him as they did 20 years ago; they still need active support in every office. He seems to feel a Directorate unit should screen files for duplication prior to retirement. He feels the Offices do not have the competence at present to identify records permanently valuable to the Agency. He mused over the possibility of halting the purge. (Mr. [redacted] also posed this.) I discouraged such a proposition. I explained that too many good things were coming from the current reviews of the files. Thousands of feet of papers need review and disposal action. Nothing should be done or said to slow down momentum of the Purge. The volume of historical records is small and the Board is developing criteria to identify such records. If we don't rush into hasty destruction actions in the offices, then the screening action by [redacted] and his Staff should suffice in the interim. The Center's final analysis before the furnace should not be discontinued. Mr. [redacted] said he would report to Mr. Stewart and he felt certain Mr. Stewart would be in touch with Mr. Bannerman.

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*Copy sent to Rec Ctr 9/4/68*

[redacted]  
Chief  
Records Administration Branch,  
Support Services Staff

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