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8 August 1968

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Records Retirement Program, Progress Report on

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1. In anticipation of a directive from higher management to reduce radically our holdings in the Records Center, we have taken certain preliminary steps to prepare for such action. [REDACTED] CRS Records Management Officer, [REDACTED] for ISG (represented in part by [REDACTED] for SSG have served as an informal ad hoc committee, together with me, in making an initial evaluation of our records situation and possible courses of action. I have also conferred at some length with [REDACTED] DDI Records Management Officer, who, while alerting us to the coming records storage review, indicated that we should not take any specific action until we hear further from the O/DDI. He stated that guidelines will be issued.

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2. I had occasion also to talk at some length with [REDACTED] the Agency Records Management Officer, who has prepared the draft directive for the Executive Director's signature. He anticipated that a memorandum would be forthcoming about 1 August with a request for a report in 30 days on initial steps that had been taken. (As of 5 August, the O/DDI had not received the memorandum.) He estimated that it might take two years to do the required job but expected that it would have to be done in one.

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3. After two preliminary meetings of the ad hoc committee, we visited the Records Center and were briefed by [REDACTED] on the status of our records holdings and steps he felt we might take initially to reduce them. We have also been reviewing the extensive files at Headquarters which relate to the materials deposited in the Records Center and to

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GROUP 1  
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procedures and practices in sending materials there. On Monday, 5 August, [redacted] and an assistant spent a day at the Records Center compiling data on the frequency of use pattern of various categories of CRS records. We expect also to obtain a recent IBM listing of all CRS deposits.

4. At the present time CRS has 10,424 cubic feet of records in Records Center, divided as follows:

Permanent	3784 cu. ft.
Temporary	581 " "
Indefinite	6059 " "
	<u>10,424 cu. ft.</u>

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5. [redacted] recommendation was that we not attempt to attack the permanent group now. Technically the documents in this group are candidates for the archives. [redacted] will make recommendations regarding these at a later date. Although some action could be taken to reduce the time limit on the temporary storage group, the primary target should be the 6059 cubic feet sent there with no definite date for final disposition. The size of this group suggests that we have either been very lax in attempting to determine the probable useful life of records we have retired and have "passed the buck," in effect, over a long period of time, or else the instructions under which we have been working have been too general to permit more precision in providing for the final disposition of obsolete records.

6. On the assumption that the forthcoming directive will seek to obtain prompt and substantial reductions in volume, it is suggested that we identify some of the larger categories first, and especially those which, by inspection, appear to be most susceptible to quick and massive purging. Once these have been disposed of we can proceed to the smaller categories, including the ones marked "permanent," many of which will require more detailed examination. Some of the large categories which seem most likely to yield early dividends are the following:

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Industrial Register: 445 cu. ft. inactive  
198 cu. ft. Vital Records  
Total 583 cu. ft.

Document Collection (Item 455), including non-CIA documents more than 5 years old, foreign documents, both hard copy and microfilm.

4400 cu. ft.

Special Register, Library Document Files (Item 38), including documents of other agencies.

800 cu. ft. (Est.)

Source Card File: 460 cu. ft.

Machine Division:  
Card Files (15,989,800 cards)

1600 cu. ft.

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7. In December 1967 [redacted] Chief, FIB, recommended that the old Industrial Register files, except those in VMR, be destroyed since there had been no reference activity in them for some ten years. [redacted] Chief, ISG, concurred in the proposal with the exception that he felt that the enclosures to [redacted] for which IR had accepted the repository responsibility, be removed before the files were destroyed. He suggested the possible use of summer employees for this job. This group of documents includes 37 cubic feet of the [redacted] Overseas Microfilm Project, which the D/CRS recommended in January 1967 be retained for another year. An early review of these recommendations by a panel of knowledgeable officers might make it feasible to start the purging of these files even during the present summer.

8. A preliminary examination suggests that there may be a large volume of non-CIA documents inactive for more than 5 years in the Item 455 category of 4400 cubic feet. Under the agreement reached in 1961 within the Intelligence Community, these documents should be candidates for destruction.

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9. The SR files, the Source Card and other card files should be similarly reviewed. [REDACTED] has prepared for the committee a summary of the large collections of cards currently in storage, which number almost 16,000,000.

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10. In order to proceed systematically with this massive and complex operation, it is recommended that a series of small "blue ribbon" panels be set up, representing the functional areas existing before the reorganization. These should consist of senior knowledgeable officers such as former branch and division chiefs assisted by a small staff of competent senior analysts who could do the preliminary work in reviewing and preparing the records for panel consideration. The CRS Records Management Officer should be directed to prepare systematically for each of these panels, beginning with the large files listed above, dossiers on each group of files consisting of copies of the retirement schedules and records, use patterns, and any pertinent directives or agreements that may affect the discretionary authority of CRS to dispose of the records. In this connection, [REDACTED] has prepared a compilation of material covering some of the agreements relating to the retention of material. This file also contains lists of selection criteria compiled by the ISG area divisions as part of the joint ISG/SSG bibliographic control study (Project 39). A simple form should be provided containing the identification of the file or files under review, the membership of the panel, the facts bearing on the problem, and the recommendations of the panel to the D/CRS regarding the disposition of the records, i.e., permanent retention, retention for a specified period, or immediate destruction. The recommendations should be forwarded through both group chiefs. Specific caveats should be included to cover mixed files which would entail box by box examination and purging. Priority should be given to the IR files and the Item 455 files noted above, with the possibility that action on the former might be started very soon.

11. Since the present records retirement schedules are tied almost completely to the previous functional divisions, it is apparent that these schedules should be promptly rewritten and simplified to conform to the present geographic organization. This can be best accomplished by a joint ISG/SSG panel of senior officers supported by an ad hoc staff

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consisting of the CRS Records Management Officer and selected personnel knowledgeable in CRS records retirement practices and in regulations and agreements related thereto. It is believed that this schedule revision will be most productive after the proposed review of records currently in storage is well advanced. The examination of past practices should help to reveal weaknesses in our present schedules and procedures and assist us in evaluating our philosophy of records retirement. This aspect of the study should address itself also to the status of the records management function within CRS with a view to enhancing its effectiveness in the future.

12. It is not possible at this time to estimate whether we can indeed cut our stored records by 50%. Inasmuch as we have a smaller volume of records in storage today than we did in 1960, it is apparent that we have not been progressively adding to the pile without discrimination. On the other hand, as noted above, there are some groups of records that appear ripe for major purging. CRS is charged also for records which we store by agreement with other components, e.g., CS Reports and [REDACTED]. This tends to inflate our holdings and should be taken into account in reporting our efforts at reduction. A related matter is the status of the records collection of some 20,000 cubic feet retained at Headquarters.

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13. Another dimension of this problem to which we should address our attention, after the purging project and the schedules revision are completed or well advanced, is the Vital Materials Collection which amounts to 1232 cubic feet. This volume is largely in addition to the total storage figures given above, but [REDACTED] reports that there is some overlapping. Here again both the collection and the schedules should be reviewed and the on-going responsibility clearly defined.

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14. CRS also has 564 cubic feet of its own publications for supplementary distribution out of 19,168 cubic feet stored by CIA at [REDACTED]. No action is indicated on this material at the present time. The [REDACTED] space must, however, be vacated by CIA in December of 1970.

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15. In summary, this report recommends the following:

a. Selection, as candidates for an initial effort, of large categories of records, especially in the "indefinite" group, which seem most susceptible to major purging to be followed by the systematic examination of all remaining categories including those now marked "permanent."

b. Immediate review and action on the previous recommendations regarding the disposal of the Industrial Register records.

c. Adoption of a "panel" system supported by ad hoc staffs to prepare recommendations for D/CRS approval.

d. Creation of a joint IEG/SSC panel, also supported by an ad hoc staff, to review, rewrite, and simplify the present records retirement schedules to conform to the new CRS organization. This panel should also examine critically the selection and retention practices relating to records maintained at Headquarters. It should also prepare recommendations for the over-all organization and administration of the CRS Records Management Program and the Vital Materials Program in the future.

e. Modification of the foregoing to conform to any specific guidelines that may be forthcoming from the O/DDI.

f. Continuation of the present committee to provide over-all guidance, coordination, and support to the program as outlined above.

[Redacted]

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