

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : CIA Archives

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for approval; such recommendation is contained in paragraph 10.

2. The purge of Agency records during the past 18 months has brought into focus the need to provide some systematic way to control and administer record materials which are scheduled for permanent retention. At the beginning of February 1970 we had about 29,000 cu. ft. of record holdings in this category.

3. As you know, records of Federal Agencies are the property of the United States Government and authorization to destroy them must be obtained from the Congress with the recommendation of the Archivist of the United States. In our case, the Archivist has waived his authority to review individual documents which we request authority to destroy. The authorization is granted based on lists we submit to him which identify general categories of record material.

4. The Archivist also has authority to determine what documents must be preserved permanently as part of the Archives of the United States. He does not exercise this authority, however, until records are transferred to his custody for permanent retention. We have not needed to seek special dispensation from this authority because we have retained custody of our own records. Eventually we will have to transfer our permanent records to the Archivist of the United States, obtain separate authority to manage our own, or simply continue to avoid the issue by retaining custody ourselves. In any case we should have in the Agency an Archives Program which will meet all of the basic standards and criteria applied by the Archivist of the United States in fulfilling his statutory responsibility.

5. We have a small beginning in this direction with the documents that have been identified and segregated for eventual transfer to each of the Presidential Libraries which, incidentally, eventually become appendages of the National Archives. In addition, about ten or twelve years ago the Agency Records Administration Officer and the Chief of the Records Center on their own initiative began selecting for an archival collection one record copy of each Agency publication.

Later arrangements were made with a few Offices to segregate from the inactive records some case files and documents which were scheduled for permanent retention. This screening continues to be done as time is available, in addition to other duties at the Records Center. This collection now totals 12,749 cu. ft.

6. Outside this collection there are 4,258 cu. ft. of OSS material and 10,362 cu. ft. of inactive Office records scheduled for permanent retention which require screening and appraisal to select those documents which are truly archival. There are another 1,796 cu. ft. of OSS materials retained in the Headquarters Building to serve the day-to-day operations of DDP/RID. Thus, we know of 16,416 cu. ft. of material scheduled for permanent retention which must be screened and appraised in addition to the 12,749 cu. ft. already screened and set aside as archival for a total of 29,165 cu. ft. of materials which must be retained permanently.

7. Screening and appraisal for the selection of archival material should be conducted by qualified professional Archivists. A definition of Archives and a description of an Archivist are attached at Tab A. The longer we delay the screening process the more difficult it will become because the volume of records scheduled for permanent retention continues to grow. We should have a continuing program to identify documents appropriate for the Presidential Libraries program. We should be planning now for the segregation of documents for the Nixon Library rather than wait until the next President has been elected. Experience suggests that it requires about three to five man-hours to review one cubic foot of records and that the screening process results in the retention of about two-thirds of the material screened. We already have enough material identified for permanent retention to keep several people fully occupied for many years. We need an authoritative archival program operating under clear policy guidance staffed by competent professional Archivists for as long as we continue to retain our own records.

8. I realize, of course, that under the current personnel restrictions it will be extremely difficult to allocate resources to this important program. If it were possible to staff such a function appropriately, however, we should have a Senior and Deputy Archivist, plus one professional Archivist to represent each Directorate and the Office of the Director, and clerical personnel to support them. In short, we should have a minimum of seven professional Archivists and positions for three clericals.

9. Eventually, we should have a storage facility separate from the Records Center to house the Agency Archives. Archives require a higher quality of storage space than other record materials

do, more like a library than a warehouse, with air conditioning, heat, and humidity controls. They should have contiguous space suitable for use by historians and scholars seeking to exploit them. Long term building plans for the Agency should include provision for archival storage. Meanwhile, the collection can continue to be accommodated in segregated space at the Records Center [redacted] To release 25X1A the Records Center storage space it may be reasonable to consider installing the archival facility [redacted] but it would not be 25X1A reasonable to move the archives there until we are in a position to staff it adequately.

10. It is recommended:

a. (a) That you approve the establishment of an Archives Program in the Agency and that responsibility for that program be assigned to the Chief, Historical Staff.

b. (b) That the Chief, Historical Staff and the Chief, Support Services Staff work together to develop policy and procedural statements to govern the Archives Program and its continuing interrelationship with the Agency Records Administration Program.

c. (c) That the Agency reprogram its resources over the shortest possible period of time to provide for the creation of a suitable staffing complement to support the Archives Program.

d. (d) That the long-term building plans for the Agency include specific provisions for archival storage.

R. L. Bannerman  
Deputy Director  
for Support

Attachment

CONCURRENCE:

[redacted]  
Chief, Historical Staff

Date

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
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25X1A

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