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DD/S 72-1853

8 MAY 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Archivists Responsibilities with Declassification of 30-Year Old Materials

1. On 28 April I attended for the Agency the meeting called by Dr. James B. Rhoads, Archivist of the U. S. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss with representatives of departments and agencies concerned Dr. Rhoads' responsibilities and plan under Executive Order 11652.
2. Dr. Rhoads opened the discussion with a brief review of the Executive Order with particular reference to the role of Archivist. He noted that the documents concerned were to be reviewed by the Archivist with the ultimate decision on continued classification being made by the agency head. He pointed to the need for agency cooperation and assistance in the review of these materials now held in the Archives pointing to the World War II documents as the immediate concern. Dr. Rhoads stressed the importance of making available to history writers the maximum amount of materials in order to ensure that the "good" history will result - non-access leading very likely to "bad" history. Dr. Rhoads concluded his opening remarks by noting that the letter and spirit of the new Executive Order are to be carried out and that change in the direction of making more information available is desired by the President. He identified the DOD, Department of the Army, and Department of State as having been leaders in the review and declassification area in the past year.
3. Dr. James E. O'Neill, Deputy Archivist, was the next speaker. He used a number of charts to demonstrate the present holdings pointing out that the growth pattern was reasonably consistent at between 175 and 185 million pages per 12 year period. National Archives holds some 160 million

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Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

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pages of records for the period 1913 - 1945. It anticipates pressure for release of the 24 million pages of 1913 - 1941 records on 1 June, the effective date of the new Order. Those pages plus 34 million pages of 1942 records must be reviewed and those declassified made available by the end of Calendar Year 1972. Quantities for the following 3 years are 36 million for 1943, 39 million for 1944 and 27 million for 1945. Dr. O'Neill pointed out that agencies must establish guidelines (Mr. Hoare, DOD representative, mentioned that Mr. Liebling's office had drafted guidelines which were awaiting Secretary Laird's approval) on retention of their materials in order to permit the reviews to be made.

4. Dr. O'Neill then outlined the proposed actions:

(a) Survey - to be made within initial agency guidelines, Agency participation on the ground being necessary. This step will constitute a gross separation with the expectation that at least 50 percent of the 160 million holdings will be opened up.

(b) Review - page by page, line by line. It is anticipated that this step will reduce the retained portion to 8 million.

(c) Agency review of remaining documents and agency head determination as to continued classification. It is hoped that this step will bring the retained holdings to 1 percent of the original amount or 1.6 million pages.

5. In response to questions it was agreed the declassification authority of the Archivist would be given to agency reviewers. It was also affirmed that there is no intention to pull duplicates in the holdings of other agencies in order to preserve the integrity of the picture of each holding organization. It also came out that the Archivist planning originated before the Pentagon Papers story broke and that requests for increases in people and dollars were presented for consideration as FY '72 supplemental item which the Congress decided was not appropriate for such treatment since it involves launching a new program. The request for increases is in the FY '73 budget. (I was told by Mr. Hoare, that Archives had requested an increase of 107 people and that DOD had agreed to put on essentially permanent detail 20 additional people, 5 each from Army, Navy, Air Force and JCS.) Dr. O'Neill

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finished his portion of the discussion by stating that the new Order requires a 5 year program to be completed in 3 1/2 years. He then introduced principal staff members Dr. Campbell, Dr. Deutrich (Military Archivist Division), Miss Smith (Civilian Archives Division), Mr. Jacobs (Presidential Libraries), Mr. Burke (Educational Program), and Mr. Al Thompson who is in charge of the declassification effort.

6. Mr. Thompson pointed to folders which had been given to each of the participants showing listings and descriptions of what is held in National Archives that is considered to be of prime concern for designated orientation. He then asked that a liaison officer be designated for each organization as soon as possible. The liaison officers should be delegated full responsibility to declassify although exemptions and exceptions determinations would continue to be made by higher authority. Mr. Thompson intends to meet with the liaison officers prior to 1 June. Mr. Thompson noted that 1945 had been selected principally because DOD and State have already moved through that year. Mr. Thompson also noted that materials of one agency held in another's records constitute a major problem. He also specified that "privileged" material under the Freedom of Information Act is a separate matter requiring different determination.

7. Mr. David Young of the White House Staff who had a major part in final production of E. O. 11652 spoke briefly. He stressed the very keen interest in this effort at the White House. He also mentioned the work underway on a directive to implement E. O. 11652 and he commented on consultation with CIA on possible computerization of the system.

8. After the formal meeting I confirmed with Mr. Thompson that only the holdings in the archives were being considered at this time. He noted that OSS papers constitute a major problem since copies are held so widely. He also said that the volumes are such that they should definitely not be sent to CIA for possible possession.



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for Support

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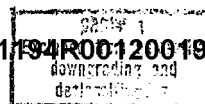
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