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OS/MS 83-556

9 NOV 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Operations

FROM: John F. Pereira  
Chief, Information Management Staff

SUBJECT: Transfer of OSS Records to the National Archives

1. This is a request for your approval to advise the CIA Historian, Dr. J. Kenneth MacDonald that this Directorate is agreed to the transfer of the declassified OSS records to the National Archives (NARS) for eventual release to the public.

2. Background: At the request of the DCI, Dr. J. Kenneth MacDonald is preparing recommendations for the final disposition of OSS records. In that context, he met with us and asked that we consider the transfer of those records to NARS. After having studied his proposal, we are recommending the transfer to NARS of the declassified portion of those OSS records which NARS has appraised as being of historical value (see attached schedule). These holdings consist of approximately 3,500 cubic feet of material. A review of them, which began in 1972 and which was completed last year, resulted in the declassification of approximately 93% of the documents.

3. In December 1979, we transferred to NARS an initial offering of 198 cubic feet of the declassified OSS records, including the OSS ETO War Diaries. None of this material has as yet been released to the public because of Agency restrictions. We now propose to lift those restrictions with the condition that foreign government information must continue to be protected, and could not be released without prior approval of the governments involved.

4. Problem: The question whether the declassified OSS records should be transferred to NARS without further review was given considerable study. The ten year long declassification of OSS records was conducted under various Executive Orders with differing guidelines for declassification. Also, the reviewers may not have taken into full consideration certain politically sensitive areas that might still be damaging to the national security and U.S. foreign relations. We, therefore, concluded that we make a final check of the OSS material not yet transferred to NARS to ensure the protection of all such sensitive materials.

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In our final check of those records we would be concerned in particular with records relating to Great Britain, whose activities were so closely intertwined with many OSS operations.

5. The Proposal: Our recommendation, therefore, is to advise Dr. MacDonalD that he may indicate in his report to the DCI that the DO has agreed to transfer the declassified OSS records to NARS in stages, beginning with the least sensitive files. Prior to the transfer of any records, we would make a final check to ensure that any sensitive material is protected. This would consist of an inspection of each box of records to check that material bearing on foreign liaison or other politically sensitive areas is protected. This could be accomplished in relatively short order as it would not require the time consuming and labor intensive process of document-by-document inspection which caused the initial review to take ten years.



John F. Pereira

APPROVE:

William Stein

Deputy Director for Operations

16 NOV 1951

Date

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