

MAR 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Plans
Deputy Director for Science & Technology
Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : Archives, History, and Records

1. Considerable study and discussion has taken place of the Agency Historical Program, and the Records Management and Archives Programs. This memorandum will outline a basic approach to the interrelationship of these three subjects in an effort to improve the Agency's performance in all these fields.

2. In essence, the three subjects all record our experience to make it available for future use as required. This use includes file searches for current operational support, briefing and training new personnel, answering press or Congressional questions as to the Agency's role in earlier events, etc. The problem is to design a system which will satisfactorily answer the needs of the future in these fields with a minimum expenditure of man hours and funds at present. In these days of declining personnel ceilings, we obviously cannot dedicate large amounts of current manpower to making immediately available detailed answers to all contingent questions. On the other hand, some records have direct value to future operations and certainly our need to handle press or Congressional questions warns us of the need to devote an appropriate effort in this direction.

3. In our approach to this problem in this internally compartmented Agency, it is essential to decentralize much of the responsibility and most of the actual effort. At the same time, this decentralization needs to be matched by a reporting system which will indicate the degree to which minimum standards are met by all units, and a mechanism by which units can profit by interchange of experience and by sharing solutions.

4. In our analysis, we must clearly recognize different kinds of records material and the different purposes we expect them to serve. Some of our records are important basic reference tools, e. g., CI files.

Some are analyst working files of moderate life requirements. Some are formal publications of the Agency distributed elsewhere in the government with source sanitization. Some are operational records and documents. Some of our reviews of past events are essentially chronicles of these events, which have value to new arrivals. Some should be analytical reviews drawing lessons and conclusions. Our system should reflect these differences if it is to do the job needed.

5. The following over-all approach to this situation has been developed for implementation through the mechanisms indicated;

(a) Records Management (HR [redacted])

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(1) The Records Management Board, with representation from each Directorate, will report its conclusions, recommendations, etc., (with any dissents) directly to the Executive Director. The Deputy Director for Support will remain administratively responsible for the over-all Records Management Program while each Directorate will remain responsible for the Records Management Program within its own Directorate. The Chairman of the Records Management Board will be the Agency Records Administration Officer, administratively responsible to the DDS through the Support Services Staff. The Records Management Board will make semi-annual reports to the Executive Director, outlining the status of the Agency's Records Management Program, any problems it is experiencing and its recommendations for improvement of the program (including reports on Records Management to be submitted by the Directorates). The Executive Director will consult with the Deputy Directors before implementing any such recommendations.

(2) The Agency Records Administration Officer will be a non-voting member of the Agency Information Processing Board, with authority to submit agenda items and recommendations to the Information Processing Board. He will particularly bring to the attention of the Information Processing Board those aspects of the Agency's Record Management Program which should be considered by the Information Processing Board, with any recommendations for support of the Agency Record Management Program requiring Information Processing Board action. He will similarly make available to the Records Management Board all information coming before the Information

Processing Board which might be of value or be appropriately considered by the Agency Records Management Board and its members.

(3) The Records Management Board will develop recommendations as to categories of Agency records (such as the categories in para 4 above, plus any others deemed appropriate) and as to specific guidelines for the selection and retention of records in these categories. These guidelines should also where appropriate include time periods for retention by category and indicate disposition thereafter, and include appropriate measures to comply with legal and Executive requirements for retention and declassification. In particular, recommendations should be made as to the identification of categories which might appropriately be retired as classified Government documents under GSA auspices or passed to the National Archives, rather than held solely under CIA control to protect intelligence sources and methods.

(b) Annual Reports. To provide the necessary chronicle of the Agency's activities at minimum expenditure of effort, a system of annual reports of the units and offices of the Agency will be developed. These will be a part of the annual program proposal submitted by these units in response to the program call, covering significant events within the unit during the previous year. The identification of the elements to submit these annual reports and an outline of their format will be developed by the Office of FPB in coordination with the Deputy Directors. These annual reports should highlight major accomplishments, major problems and overall conclusions and recommendations for future action in the unit itself or by elements supporting or associated with it.

(c) Archives

(1) In the process of compiling its Annual Report, each unit submitting such a report will identify its key documents for the year in question for permanent inclusion in Agency Archives. The Records Management Board will develop the system or systems by which such documents can be identified on a systematic basis during the year for reference in the Annual Report. The Annual Report will provide an occasion for an over-all review to insure that the documents marked for archival retention are neither excessive in detail nor incomplete through omissions.

(2) An Agency Archivist will be appointed to supervise the Agency's Archives Program, and will report directly to the Executive Director. He will be a member of the Agency Records Management Board and will coordinate the execution of the Archives Program through this Board. He will also work in close coordination with the Agency Records Management Officer and the Agency Historian. Archivists will be appointed by the Deputy Directors in their Directorates to supervise this program in the Directorate. No additional spaces will be made available for these Directorate posts and initially they need not be full-time if the functions can be handled on a part-time basis (e.g., by the Directorate Records Management Officers). The Agency and Directorate Archivists will supervise compliance with over-all Agency Archives regulations to be drawn up and issued after consultation with the Deputy Directors. A semi-annual report to the Executive Director on the Archives Program will be prepared and coordinated with the Records Management Board.

(3) Arrangements will be made for the segregation of archival documents from those held for Records purposes, in order to permit the automatic retirement and disposition of records without loss of the key archival documents. Archives will be physically held by the Records Management Officer in the Records Center, under guidelines established by the Agency Archivist.

(4) The Annual Reports will provide basic indices of archival documents for future reference.

(d) History (HR)

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The major thrust of the Agency Historical Program will be placed on the development of analytical histories of important Agency activities and operations. The "Office History" approach to date, which has been largely successful in bringing our history up to 1965, will no longer be the major focus of the program, as the chronicling of future Agency activity will take place under the annual report system outlined above. Thus, future Agency histories will take major subjects of Agency activity and analyze the ways in which the various elements of the Agency worked together to produce the over-all Agency contribution to the operation in question. There will be some situations in which a single element of the Agency

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provided all or most of the Agency participation in any one activity. There will be occasions also when sensitivity will require that any analytical review of an operation be conducted in a most restricted fashion. This will apply to many Clandestine Services histories. Priority will be given to establishing the basic Agency history of the more prominent operations and activities in which the Agency has been engaged, e. g. , Cuban Missile Crisis, Bay of Pigs, War in Vietnam, War in Laos, Congo Operations, U-2 Operations, etc. , with particular attention to lessons derived from these experiences and establishing a convenient method of immediate response to public or congressional inquiries on these prominent events. Histories will in the future depend upon the Annual Reports for much raw material and identification of key documents through the Archives Program. The Agency Historian will be an ex-officio member of the Records Management Board, will report directly to the Executive Director, and will work in close coordination with the Agency Archivist and the Agency Records Management Officer.

6. Interim Period.

In many areas it will be essential to produce one-time reports to cover the years from 1965 (or the most recent history) to the current Annual Report. This will be undertaken by each unit identified to submit future Annual Reports. In those situations in which an over-all Agency history to be produced will cover the period in question, a separate Annual Report need not be developed, (e. g. , the War in Laos, the War in Vietnam), as the necessary chronicle and Archives can be developed at the same time as the analytical history. In other cases, however, a one-time effort to catch up to the current annual report system will be necessary and this will be undertaken by the unit in question. This activity will be supervised by the Agency Historian and Archivist.

W. E. Colby
Executive Director-Comptroller