

SECURITY

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CLASSIFICATION OF CIA INFORMATION

1. The President in his memorandum of 21 December 1970 to the Heads of certain departments and agencies including the Director of Central Intelligence expressed concern over public disclosures, and directed that immediate steps be taken to ensure that existing regulations and procedures to safeguard classified information be strengthened where necessary. He also referred to the statutory responsibility of the DCI for the protection of intelligence sources and methods. In addition, in accordance with another Presidential instruction, a major effort has been underway among the several government agencies over the past year to revise EO 10501, "Safeguarding Official Information in the Interests of the Defense of the United States," involving the whole classification structure. To this end we have been looking at our classification procedures with the view of determining whether CIA information is properly classified or for that matter overclassified. All personnel are urged to comply with the principles stated in this Notice.
2. The classification process is one which requires thought and consideration and must not be taken lightly. The use of a classification is not authorized to withhold otherwise releasable.

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information on the grounds that its release might be embarrassing or might tend to reveal administrative error or inefficiency. Classification of a document requires sound judgment on the part of the individual in order to afford the degree of protection necessary to safeguard it. Under the Freedom of Information Act, documents properly classified are not releasable to the public. Officials authorized to classify must determine whether the information involved falls within one of the following categories as defined in

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EO 10501 (also see [REDACTED])

a. Top Secret Information:

Except as may be expressly provided by statute, the use of the classification Top Secret shall be authorized, by appropriate authority, only for defense information or material which requires the highest degree of protection. The Top Secret classification shall be applied only to that information or material the defense aspect of which is paramount, and the unauthorized disclosure of which could result in exceptionally grave damage to the Nation such as leading to a definite break in diplomatic relations affecting the defense of the United States, an armed attack against the United States or its allies, a war, or the compromise of military or defense plans, or intelligence operations, or scientific or technological developments vital to the national defense.

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b. Secret Information:


Except as may be expressly provided by statute, the use of the classification Secret shall be authorized, by appropriate authority, only for defense information or material, the unauthorized disclosure of which could result in serious damage to the Nation, such as by jeopardizing the international relations of the United States, endangering the effectiveness of a program or policy of vital importance to the national defense, or compromising important military or defense plans, scientific or technological developments important to national defense, or information revealing important intelligence operations.

c. Confidential Information:

Except as may be expressly provided by statute, the use of the classification Confidential shall be authorized, by appropriate authority, only for defense information or material the unauthorized disclosure of which could be prejudicial to the defense interests of the nation.

3. To properly classify a document, serious consideration must be given to the provisions of the above-mentioned categories by the classifying official, keeping in mind the need for the protection of intelligence sources and methods. By the same token overclassification undermines the integrity and effectiveness of the system and at times causes ridicule when the information becomes publicly known or passes from one government agency to another.

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4. Headquarters  prescribes certain internal Agency control markings which may be considered for use when the

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above classification categories do not apply. These markings are:

- a. Administrative-Internal Use Only. This control marking may be used for unclassified, non-sensitive administrative information which should not be disseminated outside of CIA.
- b. For Official Use Only. This control may be used whenever intelligence or intelligence information does not warrant a defense classification, but does require some dissemination limitation. Intelligence or information bearing this marking may be used for official purposes by foreign governments which have been authorized to receive it by the originating agency. It may be disclosed to non-Government persons and organizations only with permission of the originating agency. This control marking is used alone and never in conjunction with a defense classification. Some reasons for requiring such dissemination control are: protection under copyright, libel, slander, and communication laws; and protection for moral, ethical, or legal reasons.

However, employees should know the distinction between defense classification, which will cause information to be exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, and the use of the above control markings,

STATINTL which by themselves will not (see [REDACTED] Certain categories of records, primarily personnel, medical, and similar files, are exempt from public release under this Act. Use of one of the markings should serve to prevent inadvertent release of such records.

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5. In order to assist the classifying official, the following guidelines are offered:

- a. Each document ^{to} ~~will~~ be classified on the basis of information it contains or reveals, with full consideration given to the DCI's responsibility for the protection of intelligence sources and methods.
- b. Documents containing references to classified material, which references do not reveal classified information, shall not be classified.
- c. Documents will not be classified solely on the basis of their containing office symbols.
- d. Documents received from other agencies or foreign governments ^{as retaining} ~~should retain~~ the same classification or the lowest comparable classification.
- e. Administrative material ^{which is} ~~is~~ often overclassified. Formal notices as well as intra-agency memoranda often can be issued without classification or dissemination control.

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6. In order to ensure an effective classification program, Deputy Directors and Operating Officials should periodically check to determine whether documents originating within their components are properly classified. Supervisors and assistant classification control officers will continue to exercise their responsibilities in accordance with [REDACTED]

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7. This notice with the suggested guidelines is written for the ready reference of all concerned.

FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE:

JOHN W. COFFEY
Deputy Director
for Support

DISTRIBUTION: