

8/2/77

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]  
FROM : [REDACTED]  
SUBJECT : Records Review

CONCLUSIONS

(1) The difference in the percentage of classified material that could be released to the public resulting from a Twenty vs. Thirty year review period is practically negligible.

- (2) The CIA can live with a twenty year review period providing:
- (a) Management is willing to make the required resources available.
  - (b) Management is willing to live with the increased chance of error due to increased records volume.
  - (c) Management understands that this is a huge undertaking proceeding into unknown areas which could result in many, many course changes.

DISCUSSION

Within the CIA, the primary reason for classifying material is to protect an intelligence source or method. The time span that a source or method must remain classified and thus protected will vary greatly from case to case, project to project. This is especially true when dealing with a human source living in a hostile or semi-hostile area. When this need for protection is taken into consideration, it is easy to see that it is impossible to determine a general time frame that intelligence information of this nature could be released to the public, be it 20, 30 or 50 years old. Any decision to release classified records can only be made after conducting a careful review of the material in question.

The Records Review Branch (RRB), believes that until the Agency's records are actually reviewed, it would be impossible to come up with a percentage figure for material released at 20 vs. 30 year time period. And unfortunately this will remain true throughout the review process.

RRB does believe that the difference in the percentage of material that could be released between the twenty and thirty year time frames would be practically negligible. Unfortunately there are no facts or figures to support this statement. RRB did check with [REDACTED] of the IPS Staff to see if his experience in ROIA would support our belief. [REDACTED] said that while he had no statistics to support our theory, he did agree with it.

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The basic problem confronting the CIA is not the amount of material that can be released, but the amount of resources to be committed to the records review. If the review period remains at thirty years, then the Agency can probably handle the review with only a small increase in the resources already allotted (i.e. 40 fulltime personnel). However, should the time frame be reduced to twenty years, the agency would then be faced with an immediate backlog of an estimated 28,500,000 pages of classified material to review. A job impossible to accomplish without quadrupling current resources. (note: an estimated 161 personnel.)

It is RRB's opinion that the CIA can live with a 20 year review period, if the Director and the Agency is willing to make the necessary manpower and resources available. If not, then such a time period would be impossible to live with.

Finally, it should be pointed out that a records review of the magnitude of this undertaking will be a complex and involved process. It is not something that can be done overnight. Many problems will be encountered and for those who believe there are no problems involved with 20 or 30 year old documents, we point to the MKULTRA example.