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2 May 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence  
Executive Director  
Executive Secretary

FROM: J. Kenneth McDonald  
Chief, History Staff

SUBJECT: Transfer of Declassified OSS Records to the National Archives

REFERENCE: Memo for DCI from Chief, History Staff, dtd 9 December 1983, Subj: Status of Declassified OSS Records

1. This is for your information, to report on the steps taken since 2 February 1984 when you approved the referenced memorandum's recommendations for transferring CIA's declassified OSS records to the National Archives.

2. Memorandum of Understanding. In response to Office of Information Service concerns about the protection of personal privacy in releasing these records, the General Counsel recommended that CIA and the National Archives negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding, to detail the National Archives' procedures for processing the OSS records before making them available to the public. The National Archives has drafted a proposed Memorandum of Understanding, and the Agency has provided certain revisions for their consideration. We expect to agree upon and execute a final Memorandum of Understanding soon.

3. Final Check and Transfer. On 16 April 1984 three CIA reviewers began the final check of the approximately 198 cubic feet of OSS records already at the National Archives. The Information Management Staff plans to complete this final check by the end of May 1984, and to complete their final check of the remaining 2800 cubic feet of OSS records by the end of April 1985. As the final check is carried out over the next year, CIA will transfer these records in increments to the National Archives.



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4. Notification Abroad. As you know, the Directorate of Operations is preparing a telegram to stations abroad explaining the release of these declassified OSS records, so that they can inform their liaison counterparts--especially those of our Western European wartime allies--of this decision. The DO also proposes to ask you to inform the Secretary of State of these records' forthcoming release, so that he may ask U.S. ambassadors to report this to the foreign ministries of the countries concerned.

5. Public Affairs. The Director of Public Affairs has met with his opposite number at the National Archives to consider how best to announce the opening of these records to the public. Once CIA completes its final check in May, the National Archives may need as long as four months to prepare the first batch of 198 cubic feet for opening to the public. Since very large numbers of researchers will request access when these records are opened, the National Archives does not want to announce the records' transfer until they can set a firm release date for the first batch. The Director of Public Affairs will consult further with the National Archives and the interested parties at CIA after the National Archives begins processing the first batch..

6. Selective Declassification Program. CIA has undertaken to transfer a large and comprehensive collection of OSS records to the National Archives over the next twelve months. This will be a major historical resource, permitting for the first time documented studies of the role of American intelligence in World War II. The transfer of our OSS files will thus be both the first step and a long stride in fulfilling your commitment to the review and release of historically significant records.

[Redacted Signature]

J. Kenneth McDonald

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