

Central Intelligence Agency



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Washington, D.C. 20505

DCI HISTORY STAFF

29 December 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: Historical Review Program

1. In a recent visit to the National Archives, I presented the Archivist of the United States, Dr. Don W. Wilson, with the declassified version of The Central Intelligence Agency: An Instrument of Government, to 1950. This 1,000-page history, written in 1951-1953 by CIA's first Chief Historian, Dr. Arthur B. Darling, is the first CIA document to be declassified and transferred to the National Archives for release to the public under the Agency's Historical Review Program. After our meeting at the National Archives, Dr. Wilson and I jointly presented a copy of this history to President Bush, who has described Dr. Darling, under whom he studied at Phillips Academy, Andover, as his favorite teacher. I have also sent copies of this history to the chairmen of the two congressional intelligence committees.

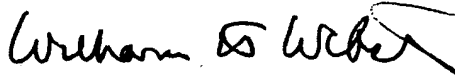
2. Other records will follow this transfer, and I have assured the Archivist of the United States of my own strong support for CIA's commitment to the Historical Review Program. This program resulted from the passage by Congress of the CIA Information Act of 1984, which relieved the Agency from the burden of searching certain designated operational files in response to Freedom of Information Act requests. At the request of Congress, and with our earlier declassification of the Office of Strategic Services records as precedent, the Agency agreed to undertake new efforts to declassify and transfer historically significant CIA records to the National Archives.

3. The Historical Review Program has been established in the Office of Information Technology (OIT), Directorate of Administration. Balancing the Agency's statutory duty to protect intelligence sources and methods with legitimate public interest in CIA records, this program is designed to make significant historical information available without risking damage to national security. As our first transfer indicates, the program has begun with the review of the Agency's oldest records. The Classification Review Branch in OIT, with the

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advice and support of the History Staff in the Office of the DCI, coordinates closely with Agency components to declassify suitable documents while assuring the security of those documents that still require protection.

4. Although this is a challenging program to carry out, I am gratified by the way that all parts of the Agency, and especially the Directorates of Operations and Intelligence, have cooperated in getting the program under way. As part of our accountability to the American people, the Historical Review Program will make possible a more accurate record and fuller understanding of CIA's role in our nation's history. I ask all of you to give this program your fullest measure of support.



William H. Webster
Director of Central Intelligence

DISTRIBUTION: ALL EMPLOYEES (1-6)

N.B. "ALL EMPLOYEES (1-6)" signifies that one copy of an issuance is available for circulation for each six employees within a specific component. (See HR 5-2.)