National Archives and Records Administration

Bi-annual Report on Operations of the National Declassification Center
Reporting period: January 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013

This is the seventh report on the status of the National Declassification Center (NDC). NDC status reports are issued bi-annually, approximately two weeks after the reporting deadlines of June 30 and December 31.

Executive Summary: As noted in our last report, we have completed all assessment analysis of the backlog. All backlog series are in the proper queue for the final quality review and processing stages; many have completed all processes. The next milestone, equity referral quality assurance, is 78% complete. This milestone represents quality assurance for equity identification purposes, identified as "Total pages successfully completing the NDC referral quality review process for national security information, including meeting the 'Kyl-Lott' requirements," in the **Status of Workload and Production** in the final section of this report. We believe we are on track for completion of this key final step to declassification processing for national security information by the 31 December deadline set by the President. The NDC is also continuing to make progress on the final processing stage, indexing and segregation, but that last processing stage will not be completed for the backlog-associated records by 31 December. Specific metrics are reported in the final section of this report.

As we have noted in previous NDC reports, our greatest challenge for successful backlog retirement has involved satisfying the requirements for Restricted Data/Formerly Restricted Data (RD/FRD) review mandated in the National Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Year 1999 and 2000 (Public Laws 105-261 and 106-65 respectively) and the Special Historical Records Review Plan Supplement to those two public laws. We have made significant progress during the last six months. Less than 60 million backlog records still require some version of page-level review, a "highly unlikely" certification, or additional documentation as to their Kyl-Lott review status. Because we have streamlined our approach and expanded both NARA and other government agency staffing, we believe we will complete this review by the deadline.

The NDC was established by Executive Order (E.O.) 13526, "Classified National Security Information." Under the direction of the Archivist of the United States, the NDC coordinates the timely and appropriate processing of referrals of 25-year-old and older classified records of permanent historical value. The December 29, 2009 Presidential Memorandum accompanying E.O. 13526 specified a December 31, 2013 deadline for addressing referrals and quality assurance problems within accessioned Federal records at NARA previously subject to automatic declassification to permit public access to the declassified records.

Each NDC Status Report contains the following three sections: a narrative highlighting select events and activities of the previous six months; a brief description of the interagency cooperation during the previous six months; and a quantitative update that provides cumulative progress on the backlog including naming selected record groups and/or series that have been completed.

Highlights:

- During the reporting period, we provided information about newly released entries, including files from the Atomic Energy Commission, US Information Agency, USAF and Naval Air Systems Command; and highlighted specific historical documents that we recently completed processing, such as correspondence of General Curtis Lemay, the USSS Pueblo ship plans, and records associated with jazz great, Lionel Hampton, when he was asked by then-President Nixon to travel to the Far East. We continue to invite public comments and suggestions by way of the NDC Blog and website: http://archives.gov/declassification.

Review:

- We continued our declassification review and processing of information relating to life in the shadows of the Berlin Wall (for the 50th anniversary of President Kennedy's summer 1963 visit to Berlin). At present, reviewers from Department of State, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Department of Energy (DOE), Army, Air Force, Navy, National Security Agency (NSA), Joint Staff (JCS) and European Command, and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) have supported our declassification and processing efforts for 195,000 associated pages from record groups 59, 84, and 218. The Army Center for Military History in Carlisle; North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (NATO/SHAPE); and the Nixon, Ford, Johnson, Carter, Reagan and Kennedy Presidential libraries also are providing records, including photos, audio, video, and documents. We are planning a seminar, including a panel discussion, related to the opening of these records, for October 16, 2013 at the National Archives building in Washington, DC.

- Although we have de-emphasized the page-by-page equity review for referrals in the NDC Interagency Referral Center in order to free up other government agency resources to address page-level RD/FRD review, participation, albeit reduced, in the IRC has continued. During the six-month reporting period (January 1 - June 30, 2013), equity review for 74,509 referred pages was completed. Of those pages, 64,418 pages were declassified and 10,091 pages were exempted for still-sensitive national security information. The IRC operation will take on an expanded role during 2013 as we apply 50- and 75-year automatic declassification guidelines to previously exempted records, stand up an automated referral notification system, and prioritize additional special collections.

- Through the NDC, the Presidential Libraries prioritized 1,830,086 pages within certain collections of the Truman through Carter Administrations, as well as the China-associated materials within the Kissinger Personal Paper Collection, for

completion of referral review through the Remote Archives Capture (RAC) project. As of June 30, 2013, equity-holding agencies had completed review on 1,365,533 of those pages, and of those, decisions on 880,591 pages have been delivered to the Presidential libraries. RAC-reviewed pages are *not* reported as part of the Federal accessioned-records backlog in the **Status of the Workload and Production** portion below.

- At the request of the Nixon Presidential Library, NDC worked a special project with nine different agencies to facilitate declassification review of the withdrawn segments from the Haldeman diaries. The majority of this material was declassified and is currently being processed by the Nixon Presidential Library for release.

Process Improvement:

- Our Metrics Team continued to provide end-to-end tracking for all NDC operations, including classified Freedom of Information Act/Mandatory Declassification Review (FOIA/MDR) work, and our current numbers reflect their continuing clean up and analysis of our data. The work of this team is allowing us to pinpoint chokepoints in our processes, report more accurate production statistics, and work toward streamlining all of our data capture efforts.

- The NDC FOIA/MDR Division continues to benefit from the improved work processes established during the last year. The effectiveness of these improved work processes is reflected in our metrics: During FY 2011, we closed 753 cases totaling 60,156 pages; of these, 632 cases were for FOIA and MDR requests, 53 were for special 'expedited' requests, and 68 were for deck logs of the US Navy. During FY 2012, we closed 1281cases totaling 169,642 pages; of these, 888 cases were for FOIA and MDR requests, 213 were for special 'expedited' requests, and 180 were for US Navy deck logs. By the end of the third quarter of FY 2013, we had already closed 1074 cases and requests totaling 874,835 pages. This drastic increase in pages processed is a result of the increasing number of processed backlog records, which result in focused, document-based requests, and increased ease in responding to short-turn around requests.

- E.O. 13526 directed the NDC "to streamline declassification processes, facilitate quality-assurance measures, and implement standardized training." Throughout the reporting period, at the request of specific agencies, the NDC hosted a number of individual training sessions, such as presentations by DOE, USAF and State, to strengthen the knowledge of reviewers on specific types of classified equities. In June, NDC held a two-day training event focusing on 50- and 75-year equity referral review. More than 300 declassification professionals attended. NDC also finalized its Declassification Curriculum, consisting of several web-based modules that can be taken independently or as prerequisites to an eight-day

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instructor-led course. All courseware is complete, and the NDC is working on the logistics of instructional delivery. The overarching goal is to educate cleared declassification reviewers, records managers, and access and security professionals on the historical background to declassification requirements and the executive orders, proper document handling, general agency responsibilities, public access to federal records, and equity identification.

Interagency Cooperation:

- During the six-month reporting period, agency personnel from Army, JCS, USAF, State, OSD/WHS (Washington Headquarters Service), National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), NSA, CIA, DIA, and DOE participated in Evaluation (sampling) and/or Kyl Evaluation (RD/FRD page-level review) Team activities. These agency partners frequently provided staffing for up to two inter-agency teams per day/four days each week including consistent assistance to Kyl page-level review efforts even for those records typically unlikely to contain their own equities.

- During this reporting period, we held several significant meetings with Navy, Army, USAF, the Naval Strategic Systems Program and DOE to provide them information on their backlog elements and discuss a way forward. Navy's expanded presence has supported the inter-agency Kyl Evaluation Team, as well as made steady progress on its subset of more technical records for both RD/FRD and equity referral. USAF will be following a similar model in regard to its remaining backlog records. Since the establishment of the Kyl Evaluation Team process in 2011, more than 45 million pages have been addressed using this inter-agency model. Once the review for RD/FRD has been completed, the series are moved to the final indexing/segregation stage of our process to make them publically available.

- To provide the public certain collections in a more timely fashion, we are working with pertinent agencies on targeted referral reviews in order to address those series heavily exempted in the past but assessed to be less sensitive currently. For example, DIA, CIA, Army, and State have been addressing targeted equity adjudication on records related to POW/MIA information. We hope to have a significant collection of POW/MIA-associated series made available during 2013.

- We hosted a meeting with the Department of State Advisory Committee on Historic Diplomatic Documentation in February to talk about our processes and review priorities. We also participated in several State-NARA meetings relating to the declassification and transfer of the multiple components of the Department of State Central Foreign Policy Files.

Status of Workload and Production:

Because of the increased maturity of our metrics program, we are better able to report our accomplishments. This expanded capability has affected all our numbers, from the initial backlog reported to the status of the various stages of processing. With that in mind, unless otherwise indicated, we are reporting cumulative production using a reporting period of January 1, 2010 (establishment of the NDC by E.O.) to June 30, 2013. These production numbers reflect the number of backlog pages evaluated in the NDC for referral quality review. A subset of these pages has been declassified and is available for public use. The remaining pages that have completed NDC referral quality evaluation are in the NDC final indexing queue, have been excluded for RD/FRD sensitivities, or have been exempted from automatic declassification by an agency.

Between January and June 2013, the NDC declassified and released records from a number of record groups, including from Army, Navy, Atomic Energy Commission, US Air Force, US Agency for International Development, and State. Additional information on these and other releases is provided on our website.

- Total backlog pages as of NDC stand up on January 1, 2010: 357 million pages. (vice 361.1 million pages reported in the last report. NDC is continuing to refine the counts of projects, boxes and pages that comprise the NDC backlog. NDC staff are able to de-conflict data found in the National Archives Holdings Management System with the ground truth of boxes in the stacks, and to reconcile legacy processing of series. Projects can be re-assigned out of the backlog for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to the following: they are found to contain exclusively special media; they have been confirmed as containing unclassified records; they were found to have been declassified prior to NDC startup; they are determined to not yet be 25 years old; or they were found to have been inactivated as part of normal archival processing. Many of these determinations could not be made until staff conducted significant investigations using NDC databases, examination of project folders and legacy documentation, coordination with other NARA units, and confirmation in the stacks. This effort is ongoing and additional technical adjustments are certain to be made. All these pages have completed initial assessment analysis.

- Total pages successfully completing the NDC referral quality review process for national security information, including meeting the "Kyl-Lott" requirements (January 1, 2010 – June 30, 2013): 278 million pages.

    o Total pages that have completed all processing: 118 million pages.

        ▪ Total pages released to the public January 1, 2010 – June 30, 2013: 71.5 million pages (61% release rate).

- Total assessed backlog pages requiring referral quality review processing as of June 30, 2013: 79 million pages.