National Archives and Records Administration
Report on Declassification Challenges
August 3, 2006

Executive Summary

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) plays a leading role in the Executive branch's declassification efforts. The inextricable connection between NARA's overall mission and declassification of records having permanent historical value is institutionalized in the governing Executive Order, E.O. 12958, as amended, in a number of areas. Over the years, NARA has achieved great success with respect to declassification of records having permanent historical value and early on established its leadership role.

NARA first established a formal declassification program for records in 1972, and between 1973 and 1996 reviewed nearly 650 million pages of historically valuable federal records related to World War II, the Korean War, and American foreign policy in the 1950s as part of its systematic declassification review program. Since 1996, NARA has processed and released close to 460 million pages of federal records, working in partnership with the agencies that originated the records. Over the years, NARA has processed more than 1.1 billion pages of national security classified federal records, resulting in the declassification and release of ninety-one percent of the records.

NARA has also provided significant support to several special projects to review and release federal records on topics of extraordinary public interest such as POW/MIAs or Nazi War Crimes. Additionally, NARA works closely with reference archivists to ensure that the federal records most in demand by researchers receive priority for declassification review and performs review on demand for individuals who need records that do not fall into a priority category. NARA has improved or developed electronic systems to support declassification, automating some processes that used to be done by hand ensuring a more complete record of declassification actions. Finally, with assistance from the Air Force, NARA established the Interagency Referral Center (IRC) in order to support agencies as they seek access their equities in federal records at the National Archives at College Park and to ensure that high demand records are processed first.

In addition to the successes with federal records, NARA has achieved noteworthy success with respect to the classified holdings of the Presidential Libraries, which hold in excess of 30 million classified pages, including approximately 8 million pages from the administrations of President Hoover through Carter that are subject to automatic declassification on December 31, 2006. The foreign policy materials in Presidential collections are among the highest-level foreign policy documents in the Federal government and are of significant historical value. Regardless of the challenges posed by the nature of the information and the complexity of equity issues in Presidential materials, the Presidential Libraries have a long tradition of safeguarding these materials while staying on the cutting age of declassification.

Since 1995, the Presidential Libraries have reviewed, declassified, and released 1,603,429 pages of Presidential materials using systematic guidelines delegated to the Archivist of the United States. NARA has also hosted on-site agency review teams at the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Ford Presidential Libraries to manage classified equities and all Presidential Libraries have robust mandatory declassification review programs to support requests of individual researchers.

Finally, the Office of Presidential Libraries has worked in collaboration with the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies to scan classified Presidential materials at field locations to facilitate review by equity-holding agencies in the Washington, D.C. area. Since 1997, this effort, called the Remote Archives Capture Project (RAC) has resulted in 3,487,706 pages being referred, and review decisions are now being returned to the Libraries for implementation by NARA.

Clearly, when provided the resources, NARA has a proven track record with respect to making previously withheld records publicly available. Notwithstanding the above, NARA is facing a number of serious challenges as it seeks to meet its strategic goals and its obligations pursuant to Executive orders, statutes, and regulations concerning the safeguarding, declassification, and release of classified national security information. Over the past ten years, unprecedented classification and declassification decisions have been made for records at or destined for NARA. Since 1995, agencies have significantly added resources and processes to their declassification reviews capability, putting further demands on NARA's limited capabilities. During that time period, there has been no corresponding increase in resources available to NARA for this activity. This has contributed to the following challenges:

- a backlog of some 160,000 cubic feet, or 400 million pages, reviewed by agencies since 1995 and which require additional declassification processing by NARA;
- the need to assess and address potential shortcomings with reviews conducted by other agencies since 1995 and reduce the likelihood of unauthorized disclosures;
- a requirement to support the timely and efficient processing of millions of pages of referrals of classified information between Executive-branch agencies between now and December 31, 2009;
- de-centralized internal management and responsibility for declassification;
- an increasing responsibility to balance openness, the protection of national security, and other sensitive interests that could be implicated by disclosure;
- a lack of sufficient tools to manage information about our accessioned classified and declassified holdings;
- a need to mitigate potential archival, preservation, and security threats to records posed by work conducted as part of declassification reviews; and
- the lack of capability to facilitate the declassification of "special media" such as microforms, motion pictures, audiotapes, videotapes, and comparable media, as well as electronic records.

Insufficient resources over many years are at the root of many of these challenges. NARA's responsibilities and workload in the areas of safeguarding, declassification, and release have grown significantly in the last decade, and will continue to grow. This demands a concerted fresh effort to assess requirements and capabilities and to identify our shortfalls. As such, a key recommendation is to conduct an expedited and condensed business process re-engineering effort. Other key recommendations include:

- an ombudsman to foster safeguarding, declassification, and release;
- enhanced training and oversight to mitigate archival, preservation, and security threats;
- a working group to focus on declassification of "special media" and electronic records;
- increasing the capability of NARA to maintain intellectual and physical control over classified national security information in its custody; and

- enhanced internal oversight of the implementation of required safeguarding and declassification programs.

An inherent component of addressing shortfalls with respect to resources is the need to ensure that limited resources are used in the most effective manner. This includes the finite resources that are available for safeguarding, declassification, and release programs throughout the Executive branch. As such, NARA and the agencies with equities in our classified holdings, must take action to realize increased efficiencies and economies of scale. Since 1995, these agencies have been focused on the review of their own records for declassification. The next challenge for NARA and these agencies is to address their information contained in the records of other agencies. Millions of pages of these declassification referrals require action between now and December 31, 2009, and millions more will require attention in subsequent years. While the problem is largely one of the numbers of referrals requiring action in limited time and with finite resources, it is complicated by a number of factors, to include a lack of standard data elements for referrals, failures to identify information requiring referral, and incorrect or inappropriate referrals.

Through a pilot National Declassification initiative (NDI), NARA seeks to establish a more efficient and effective means for the referral of classified equities between Executive branch entities, particularly with the high concentration of referrals at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. A number of agencies have agreed, in principle, to create the NDI, with the objective of more effectively integrating their work and creating a more reliable Executive-branch declassification program. The initial goals of the NDI include:

- precluding redundancies in security reviews;
- promoting accurate and consistent declassification decisions;
- improving equity-recognition;
- developing centralized priorities and databases; and
- enhancing transparency to the public.

The creation of an NDI would facilitate improvements to the system such that records are reviewed no more than twice prior to becoming subject to automatic declassification provisions: (1) a pre-accession review by record owner (required only if claiming exemption); and (2) a post-accession review by NDI, within a specified period after accessioning, to simultaneously address all referrals and assess the quality of agency reviews.

Moreover, the NDI can minimize the possibility of the inadvertent but unauthorized disclosure of information in declassified and released permanent records at NARA.

Finally, in support of the NDI, NARA can better integrate the life-cycle of records and the life-cycle of classified information in order to influence both sound records management and sound declassification. Several key recommendations in this area include:

- establishment of specialized training for records managers and security professionals;
- increased oversight of agency records management activities with respect to the unique nature of classified records;
- consideration of a dedicated process for the storage and processing of classified permanent records pending declassification and release.

Conclusions

Over the next ten years, the period covered by NARA's current strategic plan, NARA needs to be positioned to effectively and efficiently process more than 766 million pages of classified federal records. This includes:

- 400 million pages that have been reviewed by agencies since 1995 and which require additional declassification processing by NARA;
- 201 million pages of classified microfilm;
- 162 million pages that are projected to be accessioned into NARA; and
- 3 million pages in NARA's Regional Archives.

Additionally, NARA must be prepared to deal with million of classified pages in the Presidential Libraries. Even without the challenges identified in this report, the sheer volume requiring declassification processing by NARA with its limited resources is itself a significant challenge.

This report provides a number of recommendations in support of addressing the challenges that face NARA, but these are meant to serve as first steps. Combined with continued senior management focus, cooperation and support from our stakeholders, and more importantly, additional resources, the President's direction with respect to declassification of the people's records can achieve success. However, no single agency can make this achievement by itself, and Executive branch-wide success is dependent upon NARA leadership.

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I. Introduction

On May 3, 2006, the Archivist of the United States established an internal team to make recommendations for actions in response to a growing number of challenges facing the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) concerning the safeguarding, declassification, and release of records containing classified national security information. Some of these challenges had been highlighted as part of an audit report issued by the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO) on April 26, 2006, entitled, "Audit of the Withdrawal of Records from Public Access at the National Archives and Records Administration for Classification Purposes." The independent team was established within a week and formally began its efforts on May 16, 2006. The team included members from the following NARA offices: the Office of the Archivist, (N); the Office of Records Services, (NW); the Office of Regional Records Services (NR); the Office of Presidential Libraries, (NL); the Office of Administration, (NA); the Office of Information Services, (NH); and the Office of the General Counsel, (NGC). While this report generally represents the consensus of the team, it does not necessarily represent the views of the offices that participated in the effort. Through informal meetings and discussions, team members consulted with internal and external subject matter experts, to include representatives of a variety of Executive branch agencies and public interest groups. The following report is the result of this effort and should represent only the first of many steps for NARA in this area.

II. Background

Our democratic principles require that the American people be informed of the activities of their Government, and our progress and security depend upon the free flow of information. These same principles also recognize that the national defense requires that certain information be maintained in confidence in order to protect our citizens, our democratic institutions, our homeland security, and our discourse with other nations.

The system for classifying national security information is an essential and proven tool for defending our nation. It is no different than other systems in that it requires continuous attention and upkeep. Left alone, the system will likely corrode and lose its overall effectiveness, placing in jeopardy the very information it was designed to protect.

One of the principal means of maintaining the effectiveness of the security classification system is the prompt removal of classification controls from information that no longer requires protection in the interest of national security. Reducing the amount of information subject to safeguarding results in a more efficient system and promotes respect for the information that truly requires protection.

For much of the twentieth century, information once classified remained so indefinitely and very often did not become available to the general public, researchers, or historians without persistent and continuous efforts by those persons. However, with the issuance of E.O. 12958, "Classified National Security Information," (the Order) in 1995 there was a significant shift in

declassification policy. Under this new policy, affirmed by the President when he amended the Order in March of 2003 and known as "automatic declassification," agencies must take specific actions to maintain the classification of records of permanent historical value beyond twenty-five years.

Despite some limitations and exceptions, "automatic declassification," represents a watershed event in declassification policy. It has resulted in the declassification of hundreds of millions of pages of permanent records since 1995 and will result in the declassification of many millions more in the next few years. However, two significant challenges remain for NARA and the Executive branch.

(1) While agencies have largely completed declassification review of their own records, they must now address their information contained in the records of other agencies. Millions of pages of these declassification referrals remain classified pending review and decision by agencies with classification equities and require action between now and December 31, 2009, and millions more will require attention in subsequent years. Additionally, the issue is further complicated as many of the records contain multiple equities.

(2) While there is no requirement in the Order, per se, to review a record prior to it being subject to declassification and it was expected that agencies would employ risk management principles and engage in reviews of records only when necessary, agencies have reviewed hundreds of millions of pages since 1995 in order to identify information that is not appropriate for automatic declassification. Despite the fact it was never envisioned that there would be zero defects in the declassification process, agency reviews have long met with varying degrees of success in identifying such information. Action is now required to assess the quality of past agency reviews and address any serious shortcomings.

These challenges impact the entire Executive branch and no agency can achieve the President's direction on its own. To that end, and through a pilot National Declassification Initiative (NDI), NARA seeks to partner with a variety of stakeholders to position the Executive-branch to overcome these and other related challenges and to comply with the President's direction, to protect information from unauthorized disclosure, and to further appropriate public access to historical information. A proposed initial Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for this effort found in Part III.

However, NARA faces some unique challenges and impediments that must be also addressed. For example, while public access to information is necessary in order to hold the government accountable and is critical to grounding the public's faith in its government, declassification is just one hurdle to public access. Within the holdings of NARA are hundreds of millions of pages that have been declassified but which require archival processing or screening for information subject to other restrictions before they can be made available to the public. In addition to eliminating this backlog, NARA must keep pace with ongoing declassification activity. In Part IV, we have identified these and a number of other NARA-specific issues that require immediate attention and have provided some recommendations for consideration.

III. Proposed Initial CONOPS for the NDI

The NDI is an initiative being launched by NARA to coordinate an interagency effort to identify, refer and resolve classified equities among NARA's classified holdings in a timely, efficient, consistent and appropriate manner. At the same time, it supports NARA's statutory obligation to protect archival records from excess handling, loss, and damage. The NDI will exist as a "confederation" of existing Executive-branch declassification efforts at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland, in order to fulfill the declassification requirements of section 3.3 of the Order. The NDI is intended to subsume and build upon the initial success of NARA's Interagency Referral Center (IRC).

Goals

The immediate goals of the NDI are to:

- avoid or minimize redundancies in security reviews of classified records;
- promote accurate and consistent declassification decisions;
- ensure consistent application of ISCAP approved declassification guides;
- develop training standards that improve the declassification process with a focus on equity-recognition;
- develop centralized priorities and automated tools (e.g. databases);
- facilitate interagency cooperation that promotes consistency and efficiency; and
- enhance transparency to the public.

The NDI will also seek to build a capability to improve the declassification process such that records are reviewed no more than twice prior to becoming subject to the automatic declassification provisions of the Order:

- review by the record owner prior to legal custody being transferred to NARA (such a pre-accession review is required only if record owner seeks to exempt information from automatic declassification); and
- post-accession review by NDI, within a specified period after accessioning, to simultaneously address all referrals and assess the quality of agency reviews.

Overview of Need

Automatic declassification under section 3.3 of the Order has largely dealt with the "mountain" of classified information. However, agencies must now address their information contained in the records of *other* agencies. With the 2003 amendment to the Order, the President made clear in section 3.3(h) that such classified equities required special action. Millions of pages of these declassification referrals remain classified pending review and decision by agencies with an equity or interest in the classified information. Further, the President also made clear in section 3.3(e)(3) that compliance with section 3.3(h) should not result in the indefinite suspension of automatic declassification. In other words, referrals should not become our new "mountain." These referrals require action between now and December 31, 2009, and millions more will require attention in subsequent years.

Potential problems for referrals with respect to automatic declassification were noted early. For example, the Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy (1995 - 1997) noted in its final report in 1997 that the "…procedures for processing records with multiple equities are expensive and complex…" Additionally, the Commission noted that the "…process for resolving agency equities may be a major obstacle to implementing the automatic declassification provisions…"

Despite some attempts, the referral process has changed little since 1997. Multiple equities are a major problem as they require referral to multiple entities. At present, resolving multiple equities is a very time and resource intensive effort. Additionally, the policy is such that if equities are identified serially, the three-year clock for referral resolution is started over and over again for the same document. As such, the workload for NARA and for agencies grows exponentially and despite significant expenditure of resources, records are often still inaccessible to the public. There must be a better way to utilize the finite resources available to agencies to protect national security information with a focus on maximizing the number of records accessible to the public. While the problem is largely one of tremendous growth in the number of referrals requiring action in limited time and with finite resources, it is complicated by a number of factors, including:

- a lack of standard data elements for referrals;
- failure to identify information requiring referral;
- incorrect or inappropriate referrals; and
- many referrals that were identified pre-accessioning are now in new locations and have even been re-boxed post-accessioning.

There is also a legacy of shifting policies, procedures, and documentation by agencies since 1995 that further complicates the resolution of both quality issues and referrals. Just as there are problems caused by inconsistencies throughout the Executive-branch, so too are there inconsistencies within all of the individual declassification programs that make up the whole. Identifying and resolving all of the resulting issues in a consistent manner will require deliberate collaboration and communication.

The successful implementation of the automatic declassification provisions on December 31, 2006 by individual agencies will pale in comparison if the NDI successfully deals with the broader issue of referrals. If we fail to deal with the broader issue of referrals, the failure will overshadow the success of individual agency efforts to meet the requirements of automatic declassification by December 31, 2006.

Referral issues were also an underlying factor as part of the withdrawal activity that was covered in the ISOO audit. As part of the audit, ISOO determined that at least 10,990 previously released documents had been withdrawn from public access for referral to other agencies. Regardless of whether one argues that the withdrawals were appropriate or inappropriate, the situation demonstrates that referral issues remain a real and serious problem. Either information requiring protection from unauthorized disclosure was missed by agencies that conducted initial reviews or

the agencies conducting subsequent reviews inappropriately identified such information. The NDI is meant to address some of the findings of the ISOO Audit, including:

- records at NARA containing classified national security information were inappropriately designated as unclassified and released to the public;
- previously declassified records at NARA were removed from the public access even though … [withdrawal] … was not appropriate.
- sufficient quality control and oversight is not always devoted to agency reviews;
- sufficient documentation is often not maintained for declassified records; and
- NARA resources and processes have not kept pace with agency re-review and declassification activity at NARA facilities.

Moreover, the NDI seeks to minimize the possibility of there ever being a need for concern about declassified and released information in permanent records at NARA and to ensure that any concerns that do arise are limited in size and scope. After the Audit, the principal agencies involved in conducting classification reviews of accessioned records at the National Archives agreed, in principle, to create the NDI, with the objective of more effectively integrating the work they do in this area and creating a more reliable Executive-branch declassification program.

Agency Concerns

Agencies have expressed initial concerns about the NDI leadership, the resources they will be asked to provide, and the preservation of their unique authorities. This document offers one solution to address the question of leadership. With respect to resources and authority, put simply, agencies retain their authority and need only bring the resources and expertise they are already required to commit. The NDI concept will seek to utilize these same resources in a more efficient and effective manner to the benefit of the agencies, the Executive-branch, and the American people.

Agencies have also expressed concern about NARA's ability to provide sufficient staff to fully engage the resources they devote to the resolution of referrals. The problem of many agency resources and few NARA resources was raised as a problem during the ISOO Audit. While NARA has recently shifted some personnel, the agencies are not yet convinced that NARA can bring sufficient staff to this effort. Moreover, it is clear that the additional resources are not enough. However, NARA is committed to bringing whatever resources are necessary, and will seek additional resources as required. It should be noted that NW has already begun to process bodies of records to develop a growing pool of referrals for NDI processing in order to get ahead. Such activity will continue as long as NARA can identify bodies of records for which it has a high confidence in the quality of the initial agency review.

Another area of concern that will need to be considered is how the NDI might accommodate or address other agency-specific needs or issues, such as the need to provide their senior management with statistics regarding their efforts to meet agency goals. Also, agencies have varying means of employing contractor and federal resources that will need to be considered.

Operational Overview

It is estimated that there are 160,000 cubic feet of records at Archives II that likely contain referrals that must be processed by December 31, 2009. Resolving these referrals is the primary focus of the NDI. It should be noted that what follows is nothing more than a starting point for an initial CONOPS. A true CONOPS must be developed with significant involvement and input of the principal agencies and consideration by ISOO of the NDI in light of current policy.

Executive Agent: NARA will serve as the Executive Agent for the NDI and will provide the overall leadership, space at Archives II, and administrative support.

NDI Director and Staff: The NDI should be led and managed by a small full-time NARA staff. However, the NDI staff could be augmented with staff from other agencies as available and appropriate. The NDI Director should be at the GS-15 or Senior Executive Service level, particularly given the level of responsibility and the impact on NARA and other agencies. As part of the special staff, the NDI Director should be supported by individuals to focus on: workflow and support; quality assurance/control; training; input and withdrawal activity; security, and database management.

Supporting and facilitating declassification by agencies through the NDI will serve as the primary focus of the entirety of NARA's current declassification staff at Archives II. If this proves insufficient, the staff will be augmented as necessary with staff detailed from other NARA units, and perhaps even contract personnel, pending acquisition of additional resources.

Agency Senior Program Managers: Agencies seeking to conduct declassification reviews of records in the physical and legal custody of NARA and among the holdings of Archives II will be required to identify in writing a senior program manager who shall be responsible for coordinating with the NDI. The written designation shall be made by the agency head. The senior program manager will monitor and adjust the resources each agency has available to ensure that appropriate authority, expertise, and resources are available on an as needed basis. The Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), or the deputy or designee of either, shall each similarly designate a senior program manager responsible for further coordinating activities and issues related to Defense and Intelligence information. Due to their significant stake in the universe of records to be processed by the NDI, the Department of Defense will be asked to provide a Deputy Director for the NDI, someone with strong experience in the handling and protection of classified information.

Executive Council: The NDI will include an NDI Executive Council (NDI EC) chaired by the Assistant Archivist of the U.S. for Records Services and consisting of eleven voting members. In addition to NARA, the voting members shall include the designated senior program managers from the Departments of Energy, Homeland Security, Justice, and State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the senior program managers identified by the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments and the DNI. The NDI EC voting members collectively represent the entities most responsible for the interests and activities identified by the President in section 3.3(b) of the Order as appropriate for exemption from automatic declassification.

The NDI EC would review and approve work plans and priorities for the NDI based on the recommendations of all senior program managers, NARA, and the Public Declassification

Interest Board. It would make recommendations to NARA and ISOO for the standardization of policies, procedures, and documentation for declassification reviews. Additionally, it would seek to improve equity recognition and ensure accessibility of declassification tools and guidance for NDI participants.

The NDI EC shall also serve as the primary means to surface and resolve inter-agency conflicts. Those conflicts that cannot be resolved by the NDI EC will be referred by the Chair to ISCAP or ISOO, as appropriate.

The NDI EC should be formally established and charted either as either: an advisory body to NARA, a subordinate working group under the Records Access and Information Security Policy Coordinating Committee under the National Security Council, or as a means to hold interagency meetings in accordance with ISOO's authority under section 5.2(b)(9) of the Order.

Working Groups: The NDI should have several working groups to support the NDI EC. The working group membership should extend beyond the membership of the NDI EC to any agency with resources actively engaged in support of the NDI. Separate working groups should be considered for policies/procedures, planning, quality assurance/control, and training.

Procedures: The NDI blends a variety of unique authorities and responsibilities. ISOO will be responsible for procedural issues relating to the Order and its implementing directives. NARA will be responsible for procedural issues related to Federal records. In consultation with the NDI EC, NARA will develop NDI specific procedures, which shall be binding on all agencies and published in the Federal Register.

Authorities and Resources: As stated previously, agencies will retain the authorities they presently have and utilize resources they are already required to commit. Through on-site agency representation in the form of senior program managers, agencies will have to monitor and adjust the resources they have available to ensure that appropriate authority, expertise, and resources are available to meet their agency needs and otherwise support the NDI on an as needed basis.

However, with respect to authority, agencies *must* ensure that the senior program manager they designate can truly exercise agency authority. All too often in the past, agency representatives have not been sufficiently empowered to make declassification decisions, resulting in a variety of delays and inefficiencies. This is not to say that agency representatives will not be in a position to consult with pertinent agency experts as part of the needs of the NDI will be means to facilitate such consultation via secure communications platforms. Rather, it is critical to note that in order to best protect national security, agencies need to bring sufficient authority and expertise to the NDI.

Work Plans and Priorities: The NDI will establish work plans and priorities for the NDI based on the recommendations of all senior program managers, NARA, and the Public Interest Declassification Board. Such work plans will be made available to the public, to the extent possible. The NDI procedures will provide a means to adjust the plans and priorities to address unexpected special needs to process specific bodies of records on a priority basis.

Level of Review: Given the unprecedented volume of material that requires processing in a limited period of time with finite resources, the NDI will initially utilize a pass/fail approach. In other words, documents will either be declassified in their entirety or withdrawn in their entirety. If the NDI is successful, consideration should be given to shifting in certain cases to redaction. It is recommended that when withdrawn items at NARA come due for systematic declassification review, the NDI then consider redaction as an approach.

Quality Assurance/Control Reviews: The NDI will utilize several means to assess its work:

Initial Review QC/QA. There are known issues with respect to missed equities, mis-identified equities, and inappropriate referrals. There are some accessions that are suspected to require significant corrective action, others that can be implemented "as is," and others that fall somewhere between acceptable and unacceptable. To implement the initial decisions of agencies for this material would likely risk subjecting a substantial amount of classified national security information to unauthorized disclosure. Additionally, it would likely waste precious resources as we would withdraw and process for referral a significant volume of material that did not require such action.

In order to avoid such situations, the NDI will deploy teams that will conduct surveys to identify bodies of records with issues. The NDI will leverage the combined experience, knowledge, and expertise of agency and NARA personnel and utilize risk-management strategies in support of identifying problems before the materials enter the NDI processing stream. Accessions or boxes that fail to meet established thresholds will be re-processed by the originating agency or a special NDI team (peer review), depending on the situation, and then re-examined.

Withdrawn item QC/QA. The NDI will include a means to examine withdrawn items to ensure that withdrawal activity is appropriate and consistent with exemptions approved under section 3.3(d) of the Order.

Pre-release QC/QA. The NDI will assess boxes that have been through NDI processing prior to releasing them for further NARA processing and release. This assessment will serve as a final check to be certain that nothing sensitive remains in the box.

The threshold for failure in each instance will need to be determined and will have to consider involve a variety of factors, to include risk-management and sufficient flexibility. However, certain missed equities, such as intelligence sources or methods or Restricted Data or Formerly Restricted Data should result in an automatic failure.

Department of Energy (DOE) QC/QA Efforts Regarding RD and FRD: Under the National Defense Authorization Act of 1999 (PL 105-261, Section 3161), DOE has been conducting reviews and audits of agency reviewed records at NARA in order to preclude the inadvertent release of RD and FRD. NARA has previously advised DOE that it planned to perform declassification processing of approximately 5 million pages per year. However, if NARA were to only process 5 million pages in a year, it would take more than *80 years* to simply process the estimated 160,000 cubic feet on hand at Archives II today and which agencies have reviewed since 1995. NARA recognizes that this is unacceptable as does DOE, the other agencies, and the American people. Such an approach is also at odds with the current policy, which requires agencies to process referrals for this same material between now and December 31, 2009. DOE

had planned its work to date and for the near-term based on NARA's expected throughput and will likely need to adjust in order to meet the increased output expected with the NDI. However, it is possible that with careful planning and involvement by DOE in the NDI, that it too can realize some efficiencies and economies as it seeks to protect RD and FRD. Regardless, DOE has voiced its commitment to meeting NDI output provided timely coordination to allow them to consider adjustments to processes or resources, as necessary.

In all cases, there will be a formal feedback loop, which will include training aspects, to leverage QA/QC efforts of all types and to minimize repeat problems.

Focus of Agency Efforts: Initially, agency efforts will be focused on the review of their referrals, quality assurance/control efforts related to their equities, and re-review of any problematic initial reviews they performed. NARA staff supporting the NDI will provide the administrative support. For example, to the extent possible, NARA staff will pull and re-shelve records.

In time, the NDI can seek to leverage reviewers trained to common standards, with access to appropriate expertise, and with appropriate quality control measures, to maximize efficiency without infringing upon the unique authorities of agencies. For example, reviewers from within the Intelligence Community might work in collaboration to process specific bodies of intelligence records of high researcher interest or that contain intelligence equities that require identification and protection from unauthorized disclosure. That said, in all cases, unique authorities will be respected and pertinent authorities will determine when and under what circumstances their unique authorities are extended.

Education, Awareness, and Training: A hallmark of the NDI will be improved and regular equity recognition training, to include standardization labs. Such training will be dynamic and include regular feedback on problems or questions that arise as a part of NDI activities. The feedback will be focused both internally and externally in order to influence the improvement of initial reviews. Additionally, the NDI will include a means to share declassification guidance as a means of improving equity recognition.

Databases: The NDI will in part utilize the Archives Document Review and Redaction System (ADRRES) for tracking and referral purposes. As noted elsewhere in this report, NW needs to develop a means to track individual accessions throughout its entire process and in support of the NDI. The NDI will utilize this, and any other tool NARA creates to facilitate intellectual and physical control over records. The NDI should also seek to leverage the Document Declassification Support System (DDSS) described in greater detail later, at the very least as a management and planning tool.

Related Efforts: Several related ongoing efforts such as the External Referral Working Group, the Remote Archive Capture (RAC), and DDSS, all largely sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), have resulted in successes in addressing aspects of the referral problem despite being limited in size, scope, funding, and participation. The NDI should seek to build upon and leverage these successes. Similarly, NDI principles and processes will be applied to these initiatives to the extent practicable (e.g. the establishment and publication of work plans for processing records included in the RAC program).

Constraints

There are a number of possible constraints which will impact the pilot NDI. These include:

Space: Without making changes, the space available at Archives II to house the agency personnel at Archives II is spread throughout the building, and on more than one floor. Additionally, the majority of the space is on a different floor than the records, requiring constant movement of a large volume of classified records throughout portions of the building. As such, consideration must be given to either making changes with respect to space or finding ways to mitigate the negative impacts on collaboration, efficiency, and security. Consideration must also be given to how much space each agency will require, how that space will be allocated, and any special security needs of agencies.

Tools: As noted later in this report, NARA lacks a robust capability to manage its workload and inventory, measure performance and otherwise provide statistical data, and manage, track, and document other agency actions in support of declassification activities. Addressing this shortcoming on an interim and a long-term basis is critical if NARA is going to lead and coordinate an Executive-branch effort to process referrals and address quality control issues for more than 160,000 cubic feet of historically valuable records.

Additionally, the NDI likely requires a secure means to exchange information, regardless of whether space allocated to the NDI is contiguous or not. Consideration should be given to how a knowledge management tool might be deployed in support of the NDI. Such a tool could serve as a backbone for equity recognition guides, lexicons of terms and markings, policies and procedures, and perhaps serve to facilitate bringing issues forward for additional consideration.

ADRRES Terminals: Data entry as part of indexing and withdrawal activity is limited depending upon the number of ADRRES terminals and the staff available for data entry. NARA is seeking to increase the number of available terminals, but a closer examination of requirements and capabilities is needed to ensure NDI success.

Sufficient NARA staff: With few exceptions, NW staff no longer performs declassification, but rather facilitates and supports declassification activity performed by other agencies. While some of this work is complex, intellectually rigorous, and challenging, other aspects are routine. A careful examination of the requirements and capabilities is required in order to ensure that NARA is poised to truly support the NDI. It may be necessary to consider a contract to provide certain services, particularly as NW seeks to address a number of significant challenges with a limited number of personnel.

Policy: What is important in the long run is true success, not merely meeting a deadline or a requirement. In this case, success is processing and preserving records to ensure access by the public as soon as legally possible. The current policy for referrals is known to be insufficient and ISOO will have to make a concentrated effort to work with the agencies to identify means to adjust the policy to support true success and do so within the letter and spirit of the President's direction. Similarly, the NDI will need to examine issues, particularly relating to its scope of work and mandated requirements and deadlines, and communicate issues and recommendations changes to ISOO at the earliest possible opportunity.

Resistance to change: Probably the biggest impediments to moving forward with the NDI are culture, attitude, and resistance to change. For example, with respect to the idea of extending declassification authority noted previously, many individual and organizations may react strongly to such a concept. Many agencies have long resisted any sort of extension of the authority to make declassification decisions. However, those same agencies today entrust personnel to make derivative classification decisions with current information using only classification guides or other documents, and often without specialized training and little to no oversight. It is reasonable to believe that personnel can be entrusted to make sound decisions regarding information that is more than 25 years old, in an environment that includes training, resources, and oversight.

Similarly, as with any large organization, change within NARA will pose a challenge as well. Truly implementing the NDI will represent a real change with respect to how NW works in support of declassification. It may even require a re-alignment or re-organization of management and staff resources, responsibilities, and functions. It is critical that any such changes be done in a manner which is supportive of the needs and capabilities of NARA's staff. Managers and staff alike will have to embrace the NDI and any necessary changes it might bring if it is going to be a success.

Recommendations:

A. NARA should identify how it will lead and staff the NDI and commence formal planning meetings with the stakeholders at the earliest opportunity.

B. NARA should consider how it might provide incentives or otherwise encourage efficient declassification efforts and discourage inefficient efforts. For example, while NARA should provide support for the processing of declassification referrals processed through the NDI, it might only do free of charge provided agencies resolved referrals within a certain period of time. This is meant only as an example and the issue would require additional consideration and analysis, but NARA should not have to continually expend its limited resources due to the failure of an agency to address its referrals in a timely and efficient manner.

Beyond an Initial Pilot - Future Options

There are a number of ways in which the NDI can be leveraged to the benefit of individual agencies and the Executive-branch. What follows is not a comprehensive list, but rather a starting place. Some need to be considered in the near future; others can be considered and implemented in the coming years.

Integration of Reviews for Declassification and Release: The proliferation of requirements rooted in Executive orders, statutes, and regulations to protect "sensitive but unclassified" or what is coming to be known as Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) is something that has received much recent attention, particularly with respect to negative impacts on information sharing. However, little attention has been focused on the back end of the life-cycle of CUI and the impact on historically valuable federal records. Such records often contain sensitive interests related to the need to respect, preserve, and protect personal privacy; business confidentiality; law enforcement effectiveness; and internal agency deliberations. Also of potential concern are records that contain unclassified information related to the control of arms exports, certain

intelligence agency information such as names of employees, and technical data with military or space applications.

Resolving issues related to CUI in historically valuable permanent records is complicated as appropriate warning notices or other markings were often not applied by originators or applied by them in an inconsistent manner. Additionally, markings have not always been recognized or honored by personnel conducting initial declassification reviews.

Concerns related to CUI will grow significantly as NARA and agencies begin to address more modern records. While NARA has taken action in the recent past to reinforce its established practices to screen records prior to release, NARA currently lacks the resources necessary to deal with the large volume of materials that require screening. The NDI can serve as means to examine this issue in context of the records at Archives II and then serve as a forum to influence efficient, consistent, and appropriate release decisions throughout the Executive-branch.

Integration of Declassification Reviews: Agencies have requirements to conduct reviews and process referrals as part of the automatic, systematic, and mandatory declassification review programs, as well as pursuant to statutes such as the Freedom of Information Act. The NDI can likely serve as a model to promote more efficient declassification processing across these programs. At the very least, the NDI should be examined as a means to promote timely and efficient Executive-branch declassification decisions in support of access demands made under the FOIA and MDR for records at Archives II.

Training and Professional Development: There is a growing need for minimal training standards for Government personnel and contractors that support declassification efforts. The NDI can likely serve to consider and test minimum training and development standards for these and other "access" professionals that might later be promulgated by ISOO.

Strategic Research: As the United States continues to strive to strike the important balance between secrecy and openness, we need to increase our capability to make informed decisions that consider past decisions. At present the volume of information that has been declassified and released has in most cases outstripped the ability of agencies to assimilate it. We need to better understand the threats posed by the ability of our adversaries to exploit declassified and released information and take action to mitigate those threats. To these ends, the NDI could play an important role in coordinating, hosting, or otherwise supporting efforts to examine these issues.

Broader Forum: The NDI can serve as a means to seek better communication between those in the records management, classification, safeguarding, declassification, and release communities in furtherance of a more holistic approach to issues with records and the information contained therein.

IV. Challenges and Impediments Facing NARA: *Implementing a Pilot National Declassification Initiative and Providing Timely and Appropriate Public Access to Declassified Records.*

As NARA seeks to build upon past successes and improve how it supports the declassification activities of other agencies and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of declassification

and release activities, it will need to address long-standing challenges with respect to available resources. While NARA has already taken action to reallocate some resources and has changed policies and processes, these adjustments will not fully address the problems. NARA needs to carefully manage its limited resources in the most efficient and effective manner, secure *additional* resources, and plan for success.

What follows is a description of a number of issues that should be considered and recommended actions to begin this process. These recommended actions themselves must be carefully considered in light of our limited resources and competing priorities.

1. De-centralized management and responsibility for declassification and an increasing responsibility to balance openness, the protection of national security, and other sensitive interests that could be implicated by disclosure pose serious challenges for NARA.

This is particularly true as NARA seeks to preserve and process classified records for opening to the public as soon as legally possible and to represent within Government the public interest in seeing that material is not classified or otherwise closed unnecessarily or longer than is necessary. Declassification has, at times, been viewed by some within NARA as a subordinate and non-archival function and some efforts to better integrate declassification have met with limited success. Currently, management of declassification and release issues is split among a number of entities throughout the agency, as are the records, and in some cases is stovepiped among major program offices' responsibilities. Additionally, the responsibility often resides at a level which makes it difficult to maintain a focus among competing priorities.

For these reasons, as an agency, our ability to implement strategic direction is hindered and we often must deal with problems in an ad hoc manner and in a reactive rather than a proactive mode. Despite some successes, such as NL's Remote Archives Capture effort, declassification and release issues are incredibly complex and will increasingly pose challenges to NARA as we accession more modern records. The increasing volume of material subject to a growing number of restrictions, the impact on other Executive-branch agencies, and the visibility that secrecy and openness now command are all such that this is now a significant functional or program area for NARA that should be managed and overseen accordingly.

Recommendations:

A. Create an ombudsman position similar to that called for by the Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy. Such a position would not be responsible for the operational or programmatic aspects of declassification and release programs, or serve to replace long-standing relationships between NARA offices and other agencies, but would instead be dedicated to:

- reviewing and evaluating NARA's capability to facilitate the timely and appropriate declassification and release of information in its legal custody;
- collaborating with NARA's Security Office (NAS) and ISOO to foster effective and coordinated oversight;
- serving as a focal point for concerns of individuals and organizations with respect to declassification and release issues;

- focusing on the issue of sensitive but unclassified or controlled unclassified information with respect to federal records;
- seeking greater integration of reviews conducted under the various declassification and release programs at NARA; and
- otherwise serving as a catalyst to ensure that NARA represents within Government the public interest in seeing that material is not classified or otherwise closed unnecessarily or longer than is necessary.

The ombudsman should report directly to the Archivist, the Deputy Archivist, or be incorporated into NGC's Access Office and be required to submit to the Archivist an annual report on cases examined, activities observed, the results of reviews and assessments conducted, and the status of NARA compliance with relevant declassification statutes, executive orders, and other directives. To the extent possible, this report should be released to the public.

B. Formally examine and document NARA's growing responsibilities as well as its policies, processes, and management and staffing structures relating to declassification, release, and related activities in light of our limited resources and consider alternatives. Ideally, this would entail a business process reengineering effort (BPR), but in the face of the backlog and the need to support ongoing declassification activity, the status quo clearly cannot remain pending the completion of what is often a time and resource intensive effort. As such, NARA should consider an expedited and condensed effort with similar goals to a traditional BPR where we seek to first re-engineer NW's support of declassification activity in light of the establishment of the NDI. Such an effort might subsume other recommendations, such as 1.C., below.

C. NW should establish an internal working group to leverage past re-engineering efforts and consider changes in processes, structure, resource allocation, and program management efforts in order to eliminate a significant declassification processing backlog and meet its obligations to support ongoing and future declassification activity by agencies. Special planning and management controls are likely required to ensure success in both areas. For example, NW might establish a special team with the sole function of managing all aspects of the elimination of the backlog.

D. Enhance NARA's capability to ensure that information in its legal custody that is either classified or otherwise requires protection from release is appropriately protected from unauthorized disclosure. This should be accomplished by expanding upon the capabilities of NAS, which has been delegated responsibility assigned by the Archivist to NA for overseeing the safeguarding and declassification of classified national security information at NARA.

2. Lack of sufficient tools to manage information about our accessioned classified and declassified holdings.

The requirements of the automatic declassification program have been with NARA since 1995. While several attempts have been made since that time, NW lacks a single integrated mechanism to measure and track its classified holdings and its pending work related to automatic declassification. Absent such a tool, we are hampered in our ability to manage resources and to otherwise plan for success. While NW is currently taking measures to develop a basic database to track efforts to eliminate the backlog, it requires a long-term solution that provides a robust capability to manage its workload and inventory and as a capability to measure its performance

and otherwise provide statistical data. Additionally, such a solution must provide a capability to manage, track, and document other agency actions.

Recommendations:

A. Identify and document NW's business and data requirements for managing the entire declassification process and safeguarding classified records. This process should include input from the agencies that NW supports and an examination of their requirements.

B. Determine whether any existing or planned NARA systems (such as ADRESS/URTS, CMRS, ERA, HMS, or RCPOS) or other alternatives can be utilized in whole or in part to meet the requirements identified above. Develop a strategy, both short and long term, to implement systems that meet the requirements and to ensure that the systems used by NARA to manage classified records throughout their life-cycle support one another.

C. Examine how we might support and leverage DDSS. At the very least, DDSS has the capability to serve as an important management and planning tool. DDSS was developed and managed by CIA, with direction from Congress, to manage information about equities contained within permanently valuable classified federal records. In short, DDSS seeks to bring together numerous disparate databases developed using different technologies and non-standard data structures. At present, DDSS contains information on more than 788,000 referrals (48 million pages) of permanent records and its content is expected to continue to increase as data from additional agencies is ingested. More than 70 percent of the referrals contained within DDSS are for records in the legal and physical custody of NARA, specifically referrals of records located at Archives II.

3. Impact of declassification activity on records.

We need to take active steps to mitigate any potential archival, preservation, and security threats to records that are posed by work conducted as part of declassification reviews. Since 1995, agencies have had unprecedented access to accessioned federal records as NW has sought to support activities related to automatic declassification. Agency representatives, including contractors, have been working with millions of pages of permanent records over a long period of time with little oversight. Declassification activity typically occurs before NARA is able to conduct other processing. Often, the declassification personnel of other agencies and the contractors that support them are the first to work with accessioned records. In such cases, they access and use the records before knowledgeable NARA staff have gained intellectual control over the records or otherwise assessed whether individual records are especially vulnerable to theft or are in extremely fragile condition. Absent oversight, we know little about the impact such work has had on our archival holdings. Moreover, we are not positioned to take action to prevent or minimize the risk of future loss or damage, whether physical or intellectual.

Recommendations:

A. Establish an internal NARA working group to examine the potential archival, preservation, and security threats posed by declassification activities and develop a strategy to mitigate those threats and institute related protocols that can be enforced.

B. Develop and implement a mandatory formal training program for NARA staff, contractors, and declassification personnel from other agencies that work with records. The training should address the potential threats to records, protocols and procedures to protect records, and the specific responsibilities of personnel afforded regular access to records and materials in the legal custody of NARA outside of our research rooms. Such training should be developed and implemented on an expedited basis. Additionally, NARA should require refresher training along the lines of the mandatory information technology security training conducted by NH and access to records and materials in the legal custody of NARA outside of our research rooms should be contingent upon completion of required training.

C. Develop and implement an internal NARA capability to oversee agency actions and to otherwise assess on a regular basis whether declassification activity is placing records at risk. Such an oversight capability should include a means to identify recurring or new threats and provide corrective direction to pertinent personnel in a timely manner.

4. Lack of capability with respect to "special media" and electronic records.

At the request of NARA and other agencies, in March of 2003, the President provided an additional five years for agencies to comply with the automatic declassification provisions for classified information contained in microforms, motion pictures, audiotapes, videotapes, and comparable media as declassification review of such media might be more difficult or costly. As a result, the initial onset of the automatic declassification provisions for such media was extended from December 31, 2006 to December 31, 2011. Although the President provided relief nearly three years ago, little has been done to better position NARA for success. Today, our internal labs lack sufficient space, equipment, and cleared personnel to process materials in support of declassification and we lack staff with training and experience specific to the declassification of special media. Additionally, we lack a complete inventory or other means to readily identify with precision the volume of special media material subject to automatic declassification. However, NW personnel have recently estimated that the current classified special media holdings of NW include:

- 80,318 reels of microfilm[1], of which more than 59,412 are in proprietary formats;
- 4,582 sheets of microfiche;
- more than 2,975 motion picture film elements, sound recordings, and videotapes;
- 631 cubic feet of cartographic materials (maps, charts, overlays, aerial film); and
- 32 cubic feet of still images (prints and negatives).

Additionally, NL has a significant volume of special media that requires attention.

Also of concern is that NARA needs to better prepare to deal with the complexities of electronic records. Electronic records are not considered special media unless there are documented and specific issues with respect to the obsolescence of software or hardware or degraded data. While NARA is pursuing an increased capability with its Electronic Records Archive, issues remain unclear as to how required declassification activities will occur.

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[1] The 80,318 reels of microfilm are highlighted here as special media due to issues that make declassification review more difficult or costly. However, the volume of information will pose a significant challenge as well. It is estimated that these reels contain the equivalent of 200,795,000 textual pages.

Recommendations

A. Establish a working group led by NW and with NL participation to:

- formally examine and identify the magnitude of the special media problem and determine the required capabilities and resources;
- coordinate with NARA's Risk Review Board;
- prepare a special training session on issues unique to special media to better prepare NARA staff and other agency personnel and contractors;
- identify special media records requiring preservation activity prior to further processing;
- work with NL to consider how to leverage capabilities and resources developed to respond to the critical mass of special media records at Archives II in order to address the special media holdings of the Presidential Libraries; and
- examine how conversion from analog formats to digital formats might facilitate declassification and release of special media, particularly those that cannot be declassified in their entirety, and how such a capability can be exploited to support of other NW and NL declassification and release programs.

B. Facilitate discussions and exchanges with outside experts and stakeholders focused on the declassification of special media and electronic records in order to seek input and identify best practices.

Potential Consequences of Eliminating NW's Existing Declassification Processing Backlog:
Expected Significant Increases in Demand for Finite Resources.

There are a number of significant increases in demand for our finite resources that need to be anticipated or otherwise considered as we attempt to move toward more timely and appropriate access to declassified records in our holdings, and in particular as we eliminate NW's existing declassification processing backlog.

Space. As the backlog is eliminated, there will be an increased demand for space in other stack areas (for both non-classified and withdrawn items) at Archives II. Given that space at the Archives II is limited, consideration must be given as to our ability to absorb the estimated 160,000 cubic feet that make up the backlog, whether on-site or at alternative locations. While utilizing alternative locations is clearly an option that must be considered, even that option cannot be exercised without committing additional resources. Additionally, we need to better plan for incoming classified accessions (estimated by NW to be 65,000 cubic feet or 162,500,000 pages, between 2007 and 2016).

Screening. As the backlog is eliminated, the volume of declassified records requiring screening will increase significantly. As noted previously, permanent records at NARA often contain CUI and screening is required in order to protect sensitive interests that are often found in the federal records in our custody. NARA's Special Access and FOIA staff (NWCTF) cannot meet the present demand with current resources and similarly cannot handle the expected increased demand.

Access demands under FOIA and MDR. As part of eliminating the backlog, millions of pages will be replaced with withdrawn item notices, increasing the volume of items that are likely to be requested under FOIA and MDR. NWCTF cannot meet the present demand with current resources and similarly cannot handle the expected increased demand.

Systematic Declassification Review. As millions of pages are withdrawn as part of eliminating the backlog, the volume of records requiring systematic declassification review will increase significantly and NARA will need to manage and support subsequent reviews of these items in the future.

Archival processing and preservation activities. Eliminating a backlog of some 160,000 cubic feet will clearly place increased demand on other aspects of processing and preservation activities, which are known to be under-resourced at present.

Recommendation:

Ensure that the above items are formally considered as part of existing NARA efforts or as part of the implementation of one or more of the recommendations found elsewhere in this report.

The Future: *The Life-cycle of Records and the Life-cycle of Classified National Security Information Need to be Integrated.*

It has long been recognized that sound records management is essential to sound declassification. Both the Order and its implementing directives speak to the importance of sound records management with respect to the timely and appropriate declassification of classified national security information. This linkage was also a focus of the Commission on Protecting and Reducing Government Secrecy. In its final report in 1997, it noted that the lack of public access to government records no longer needing protection as classified was "inextricably tied to a legacy of poor records management practices across the Government" and that "[c]ooperative working partnerships among agencies and the National Archives are integral to achieving the effective records management programs necessary to ensure that the Government's declassification practices work well."

The Commission called upon NARA to exert a strong leadership role within the Government and to better integrate classification and declassification management and records management. While NARA has made great strides with respect to records management in the years since the Commission examined this issue[2], what is needed is better integration of the life-cycle of records and the life-cycle of the classification/declassification of the information contained therein. Other than increased communication between records management personnel and declassification personnel in order to identify records subject to automatic declassification, little has changed in this area. There is also concern that an emphasis has been placed on the link between records management and declassification without an emphasis on how sound records management supports the safeguarding of classified records. Concern has also been raised that there is little or no capability for NARA to oversee agency records management actions. NARA ought to be at the forefront of ensuring Executive-branch success and otherwise integrating these critical issues.

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[2] See: http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/strategic-directions.html

Recommendations:

A. Expand the role of the ombudsman described above such that the position also serves an advocacy role seeking to address declassification issues before they arise at NARA. The ombudsman would then work closely with a variety of other agency personnel involved in the life-cycle of information, including records managers, training officers, classifiers, declassification personnel, FOIA officers, etc., as well as pertinent NARA offices.

B. Initiate a focused education effort for Executive-branch personnel with responsibilities related to classified information in order to enhance sound records management in agencies, programs, and offices that largely work with classified records. Such an effort should include:

- an advocacy component, such as correspondence directed to agencies stressing that their responsibilities for records management apply to all records, regardless of classification, and otherwise noting the importance of records management as a means to both protect sensitive information and ensure its timely, appropriate, and orderly declassification;
- a one-day records management training program dedicated to informing security professionals of basic records management principles, pertinent laws and regulations, their responsibilities, and of additional training and resources;
- offer training similar to the training noted above, but with the goal instead of informing records managers with respect to safeguarding, classification, and declassification issues;
- a targeted assistance component;
- creation of training products such as posters and written guidance, available both on NARA's website and in hardcopy, that can be utilized by personnel that are unable to attend formal training; and
- working with agencies to establish a records management presence on large systems that have been developed for the exchange of classified information, such as the Department of Defense's Secret Internet Protocol Router and the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System.

C. NARA needs to examine agency records management activities with respect to the unique nature of classified records and in the context of NARA's Strategic Directions for Federal Records Management Initiatives.

D. NARA should consider a dedicated and controlled stream for classified permanent federal records in support of preserving and processing classified records for opening to the public as soon as legally possible, representing within Government the public interest in seeing that material is not classified or otherwise closed unnecessarily or longer than is necessary, and otherwise ensuring the timely, efficient, and appropriate declassification and release of information to the public. Such a concept would seek to consolidate disparate and dispersed activities related to classified federal records into a single NARA controlled facility.

The consolidation would seek to achieve a variety of efficiencies and economies for the Government while enhancing NARA's ability to carry out its traditional responsibilities with respect to classified federal records. Moreover, this recommendation is vital to preventing the current situation from re-developing and proving a severe financial burden or possible national

security risk to NARA and other agencies. A variety of issues would need to be considered, such as the relationship to records center operations and reimbursable revenues, as well as how such a facility might impact NARA's long-term space needs, but what follows are some conceptual ideas:

- The facility should provide appropriate storage for all media types and appropriate security measures for all types of classified information. Similar to the current Federal Record Center model, federal records sent to the facility would be in the physical custody of NARA but remain in the legal custody of the agencies. The facility could fully leverage technology such as bar code scanning or RF tagging in order to address the challenges of maintaining accountability for boxes of classified records and their contents.

- As permanent classified federal records neared the appropriate time for transfer to NARA, they would undergo pre-accessioning processing for declassification and release. Such activity would be subject to NARA and ISOO oversight and a variety of other quality control measures. The agency would then transfer physical and legal custody to NARA of declassified and releasable boxes with segregated withdrawn items, all of which would be sent to Archives II or maintained in NARA space at the facility.

- The facility should be located in close proximity to Archives II, perhaps leveraging either the Washington National Records Center (WNRC) or space at Fort Meade. Establishing the facility on the Fort Meade complex would increase security and likewise the comfort of our DoD and IC stakeholders. Additionally, there is an established special destruction facility on-site that could perhaps be leveraged for the destruction of temporary classified records. Establishing a facility that was dedicated to classified records, staffed with cleared personnel, and on a controlled complex would also likely increase the willingness of agencies to transfer particularly sensitive records to NARA.

- Establishing a facility at a location other than WNRC would increase the space available at WNRC that could be used for reimbursable services for unclassified records or to house or stage lesser-used permanent records as part of addressing space concerns at Archives II. Similarly, establishing the facility would make available much needed office, storage, and processing space at Archives II. Combining the facility and the NDI removes a significant number of personnel from other agencies from Archives II. This not only frees office and processing space, but makes other limited resources, such as parking, available for use by researchers. This focuses the capabilities at Archives II on records that that can readily be prepared by NARA for use by researchers.