

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

THIRD SESSION OF THE
DoD HISTORICAL RECORDS DECLASSIFICATION

ADVISORY PANEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Friday, August 9, 1996
0900-1400 hours
National Archives Building
Reception Room 105

CHAIRPERSON: DR. ALFRED GOLDBERG, Historian
Office of the Secretary of Defense

PANEL MEMBERS:

ERNEST MAY
MARC TRACHTENBERG
ROBERT WAMPLER
GERHARD WEINBERG
WILLIAM EPLEY
WILLIAM DUDLEY
WILLIAM HEIMDAHL
DAVID A. ARMSTRONG
FRED GRABOSKE
MERVYN LEFFLER

STAFF MEMBERS:

CYNTHIA KLOSS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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2 The DoD Historical Records Declassification
3 Advisory Panel opened its fourth meeting on November
4 15th, 1996, with a recap of the action items from the
5 previous meeting.

6 Chairman Goldberg stated that as the first
7 year of operation of the panel came to an end, the
8 recommendations made have had a mixed fate. An effort
9 has been made to resolve the problems, but it's a
10 theoretical process and the panel now has pragmatic
11 work to do; i.e., how to put recommendations into
12 practice?

13 The policy letter is still going through
14 draft and coordination and may drag on for months.
15 Also, quality and quantity in declassifying top-level
16 material is being stressed, and that it is difficult to
17 turn the declassifiers around to doing it the way the
18 panel wants, and that they don't have the resources.

19 Central mechanism for speeding up
20 declassification, getting referrals handled more
21 quickly, doesn't have much enthusiasm.

22 There has been some success in training, but
23 resources are still a problem. Basic issues include
24 allocation of resources and the priority for
25 declassification. Declassification is going on but not

1 in quality or quantity.

2 Measurements of progress. Two pilot projects
3 have been done. Reports are needed on progress of
4 declassification work, and there has been progress on
5 disposition of records, transfer to Archives, and
6 accessibility to the records.

7 In the orientation briefings, the Department
8 of State Historical Advisory Panel, represented by
9 William Kimball, stated it is a difficult job but can
10 be done. The State Department committee was created
11 with nine people operating independently. It is
12 responsible to Congress and the President for
13 implementation of provisions of law. It has real
14 oversight responsibility.

15 In the Department of Energy's briefing, Janet
16 O'Connell said DOE has a system that's based heavily on
17 classifier standards that are being continuously
18 updated and also has formal training for its people.

19 The Openness Advisory Panel had its first
20 meeting and is struggling with a lot of issues. There
21 are four subgroups focusing on legal issues, Atomic
22 Energy Act, accessibility with NARA issues,
23 productivity and priorities. The panel also focuses on
24 national security and nuclear-related information
25 restricted data.

1 The United States Information Agency,
2 represented by William Harwood, stated it has 5,300
3 boxes to review. Mr. Harwood discussed a December
4 conference and how the operation is working.

5 The December conference will be for all
6 government agencies involved in declassification. A
7 problem has been lack of coordination on policies and
8 technical issues.

9 During the Open Panel Discussion, central
10 mechanism was again discussed for handling referrals
11 for DoD components. Suggestion was to recommend to the
12 Secretary of Defense to have a central referral with
13 authority over equities of other agencies within DoD,
14 but resources will be needed.

15 Discussion was then held concerning the
16 recommendations with no clear answers.

17 The Open Panel Discussion continued after
18 lunch with a discussion on accessions for OSD that have
19 been reviewed and transferred to College Park.

20 The meeting was closed by Chairman Goldberg
21 stating that interesting suggestions had been made, and
22 they would be discussed in future meetings.

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In the Matter of: ADVISORY PANEL - -

were held as herein appears and that this is the original transcript thereof for the file of the Department, Commission, Administrative Law Judge or the Agency.

Bulane Bowman
Official Reporter.

Dated: NOVEMBER 15, 1996