

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

National Declassification Center Prioritization Plan

I. Background

On 29 December 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13526 (E.O. 13526), creating the National Declassification Center (NDC) under the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and a memo entitled “Implementation of the Executive Order, Classified National Security Information.” The following day Archivist of the United States David Ferriero established the NDC to achieve the goals of ensuring that records are reviewed in a timely and efficiently, and making these records available to the public. Once established, the Acting NDC Director began developing a prioritization plan, in compliance with section 3.7(d) of E.O. 13526, for the declassification review and public release of classified records held by NARA. The plan incorporates the interests of NARA’s customers, to include researchers, the general public, the media and Federal agencies, and the Public Interest Declassification Board’s (PIDB)¹ recommendation that records of high public interest receive declassification priority. The NDC Director will use the plan to prioritize declassification, and the adjudication of referrals in the Interagency Referral Center (IRC)² and the Remote Archives Capture (RAC)³ programs.

The plan was developed to ensure that declassification resources are applied in a thorough and consistent manner, while focusing on those records of the highest public interest.

II. Prioritization Method

To achieve the NDC goal of making declassified records available to the public, three factors affect how records will be prioritized:

- 1) High Public Interest – The NDC will use a variety of sources, including public input through a variety of social media technologies, and information about records requested in the NARA research rooms, and by the public through the Freedom of Information Act, the Presidential Records Act and Mandatory Declassification Review provisions of E.O. 13526⁴, to determine the level of public interest.
- 2) Likelihood of Declassification – Factors include complexity of information, volume of tabs (exemptions, exclusions, referrals) and age of material. There are a number of lower level classified records which may lend themselves to quick turnaround, while other records contain classified information that must be protected under E.O. 13526 and will not result in significant public release.

¹ The Public Interest Declassification Board is an advisory committee established by Congress in order to promote the fullest possible public access to a thorough, accurate, and reliable documentary record of significant U.S. national security decisions and activities.

² The Interagency Referral Center was developed in 2006 by NARA as part of the National Declassification Initiative (NDI). The IRC was a voluntary program that consolidated review and referral (information within a document that is potentially classified by another agency) of Federal records in NARA custody into one central location within the National Archives at College Park. The IRC is now mandatory and part of the NDC.

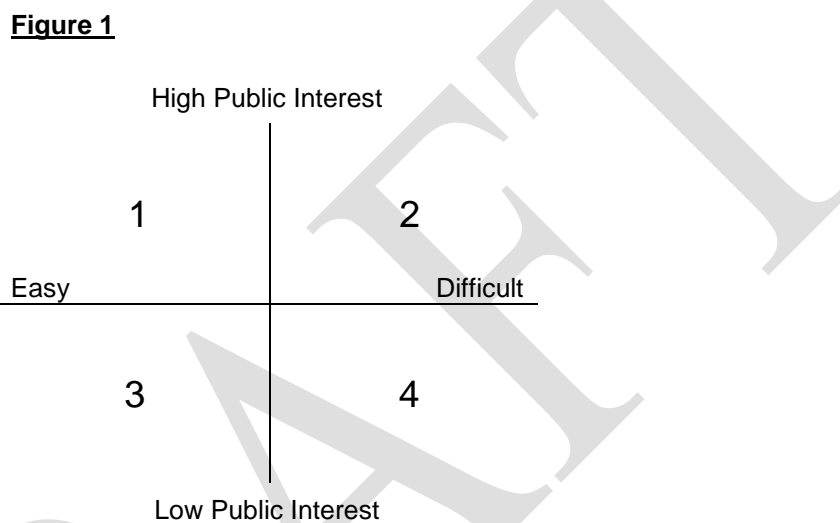
³ The Remote Archives Capture Program was established in 1996 as a joint effort between the Presidential Libraries and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to facilitate declassification review and referral of classified Presidential papers in remote locations. This program digitally scans remotely located Presidential classified records and makes all twenty-five year old classified materials available electronically for declassification review in a centralized location in the Washington, DC area.

⁴ Researchers may submit FOIA and MDR requests for records at NARA that are not yet available to the public.

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

- 3) Resources Required to Complete Declassification – Some Record Groups (RGs) are have information that must be protected under the provisions established in E.O. 13526, and contain multiple referrals to other equity agencies. Addressing interagency referrals is labor intensive for the NDC and the agencies in the current process. Performing declassification is more difficult on records with multiple referrals and would slow down the process. Researcher interest would determine how these records fit into the prioritization plan.

To apply these criteria to classified records and develop a balanced plan, the NDC developed a matrix that places classified records in one of four categories. The categories are illustrated on a four quadrant diagram (figure 1).



The following definitions were applied to each axis:

- The horizontal axis represents the likelihood of declassification and the level of effort required to move records through the NDC to the open shelf.
 - Records determined to be “Easy” have few referrals and/or have a high probability of declassification.
 - Records determined to be “Difficult” contain multiple referrals and/or have most of the documents exempted under E.O. 13526.
- The vertical axis shows the level of public interest in the declassification of the records (as defined above).

Using these definitions each category (quadrant on Figure 1) was then defined as:

- Category 1 (High Interest, Easy to process) – 1% of the backlog
- Category 2 (High Interest, Difficult to process) – 90% of the backlog of Federal records and 100% of Presidential materials referred through the RAC.
- Category 3 (Low Interest, Easy to process) – 2% of the backlog
- Category 4 (Low Interest, Difficult to process) – 7% of the backlog

Initially the NDC will devote the majority of resources to the records in categories 1 and 2, with fewer resources devoted to categories 3 and 4.

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

Using this matrix model, NDC placed the classified record groups (RG) and Presidential materials into one of the four categories. Each RG will be further subdivided to place each series or collection into one of the four categories (see Appendix A). The NDC will use this information to prioritize review of records in the RAC system and the IRC, and to develop work plans that will focus on the highest priority records for declassification review and release. In preparation for discussions with agency partners and the public, the NDC, in coordination with the Office of Presidential Libraries, developed the following draft prioritization plan:

III. Prioritization Plan

Within the NDC there will be two separate workflows:

- Quality Assurance review and release of the eligible material within the 408 million page backlog of Federal records cited in the President’s Memo⁵;
- Declassification review and release of interagency referrals of eligible Federal records through the IRC, and Presidential records referred through the RAC.

Declassification Review and Interagency Referrals

By analyzing the goals and deadlines for each of these processes the NDC has determined that - for Federal records - the primary focus must be eliminating the backlog. For Federal records, the processing of interagency Federal referrals will be a secondary focus. This approach will make the largest volume of declassified records available to the public in the shortest period of time. The NDC will concentrate the majority of the declassification review resources on Federal records that fall into categories one and two of the prioritization plan, with fewer resources utilized on categories three and four.

A similar analysis of approaches to declassification of interagency referrals, led to the conclusion that the primary focus for these materials must be processing of interagency referrals. The priority for interagency referrals will be the high interest Presidential records in the RAC.

Using input from reference archivists at Archives II and the Office of Presidential Libraries, the chart below outlines the top priorities for the backlog and interagency referrals.

Backlog Priorities (Federal Records)	Interagency Referral Priorities (Presidential and Federal Records)
Category 1 Records	Presidential Referrals through RAC

⁵ In section 2 of the President’s memo he states “Under the direction of the National Declassification Center (NDC), and utilizing recommendations of an ongoing Business Process Review in support of the NDC, referrals and quality assurance problems within a backlog of more than 400 million pages of accessioned Federal records previously subject to automatic declassification shall be addressed in a manner that will permit public access to all declassified records from this backlog no later than December 31, 2013.”

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

<p>Category 2 Records: High Interest RGs that account for 2/3 of records pulled for researchers at Archives II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Department of State</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ RG 59 – General Records of the Department of State○ RG 84 – Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State• <u>RG 306</u> – Records of the U.S. Information Agency• <u>RG 19</u> – Records of the Bureau of Ships• <u>Army</u> (Units in WWII, Korea and Vietnam)<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ RG 407 – Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1917○ RG 472 – Records of the U.S. Forces in Southeast Asia, 1950-1975• <u>RG 226</u> – Records of the Office of Strategic Services• <u>High level military records</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ RG 218 – Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff○ RG 319 – Records of the Army Staff○ RG 330 – Records of the Office of the Secretary of Defense○ RG 338 – Records of U.S. Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations○ RG 342 – Records of U.S. Air Force Commands, Activities, and Organizations <p>Category 3 Records</p> <p>Category 4 Records</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Harry S Truman</u> - Remaining Backlog of Referrals• <u>Dwight D. Eisenhower</u> - Remaining Backlog of Referrals• <u>John F. Kennedy</u> – National Security Files• <u>Lyndon Baines Johnson</u> – National Security Files• <u>Richard Nixon</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Erlichman and Haldeman Staff Member Office Files○ President's Office File○ Latin American Country Files• <u>Gerald R. Ford</u> – National Security Files• <u>Jimmy Carter</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Brzezinski Materials○ Jimmy Carter Presidential – President's Files – Staff Secretary's File○ NSC Institutional Files, 1977-81○ Donated Historical Material – Mondale, Walter F.• <u>Kissinger Collection Scanned at the Library of Congress</u> - Materials related to China <p>Federal Record Referrals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Federal Records in the IRC</u>
--	---

The annual goals and resource allocations for processing and review of Federal and Presidential records in the NDC will be approved by the NDC Director in consultation with Office of Presidential Libraries, NDC management, agencies participating in the NDC, and the public. The NDC Director will provide each agency with a list of NDC priorities to guide their declassification work planning, the volume of Federal and Presidential records in their review queues under the NDC, and review deadlines for records under the NDC. Agencies will be expected to provide a sufficient number of reviewers to meet established NDC goals, or accept automatic declassification of their equities as outlined in E.O. 13526.

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

This plan sets the priorities for the remainder of the current and next fiscal years. NDC priorities will be updated at three year intervals, or as needed based on changing priorities and workloads.

IV. Public Input

The NDC is committed to focusing our efforts on those records determined to be of high public interest. Draft prioritization plans will be created using NARA experts to identify which records are of high public interest. To ensure NDC prioritization plans meet the needs of the public, the NDC Director in conjunction with the Office of Presidential Libraries will solicit public input through a series of programs using social media tools and town hall meetings. Draft plans will be made available on the NDC website, and distributed to archival, historical (both Federal and non-Federal), and public interest groups through e-mail, and other social media tools. The NDC will utilize blogs and public forums to collect input on draft plans. The NDC Director will consolidate all input to create a final version of the plan, and establish milestones. The final plan, milestones and quarterly progress reports will be available to the public on the NDC website.

The NDC will update prioritization plans as high priority records are declassified and priorities change. We will continue to use social media tools to encourage and collect public input for future updates. Through these efforts we will maintain a plan that strives to meet the expectations of the public and the President's vision for an interagency National Declassification Center.

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

Appendix A – Breakdown of NARA Federal RGs into Categories

Category 1 Record Groups (High Interest, Easy to Process)

RG	Title	Entries	Volume
24	Bureau of Navy Personnel (Deck Logs)	14	57
107	Secretary of War	1	1
153	JAG (Army)	13	94
160	U.S. Army Service Forces (WWII)	3	3
226	Office of Strategic Services	12	13
260	U.S. Occupation Headquarters, WWII	4	8
263	Central Intelligence Agency	23	178
272	Kennedy Assassination Commission	1	1
273	National Security Counsel	37	334
304	Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization	2	18
331	Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters WWII	24	11
332	U.S. Theaters of War, WWII	4	5
336	Chief, Transportation	42	429
337	HQ, Army Ground Forces	53	133
359	Office of Science and Technology	22	878
472	U.S Forces in Southeast Asia	59	121
494	U.S. Army Forces in the Middle Pacific (WWII)	1	1
500	U.S. Army Major Operational and Tactical Formations (WWII and after)	1	1
			2,286 cuft

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

Category 2 Record Groups (High Interest, Difficult to Process)

RG	Title	Entries	Volume
19	Bureau of Ships	393	4851
38	Chief of Naval Operations	405	5631
43	International Conferences, Commissions and Expositions	23	73
59	State Department	1273	9434
60	Department of Justice	1930	7044
65	Federal Bureau of Investigation	104	2073
72	Bureau of Aeronautics	82	8393
74	Bureau of Ordnance	34	4578
77	Chief of Engineers	121	603
84	Foreign Service Posts	1122	8152
92	Quartermaster General	21	143
111	Chief Signal Officer	88	697
127	United States Marine Corps	149	1313
156	Chief of Ordnance	148	1739
159	Inspector General (Army)	21	30
175	Chemical Warfare Service	17	139
181	Naval Districts and Shore Establishments	82	855
204	Pardon Attorney	1	2
218	Joint Chiefs of Staff	179	3918
255	National Aeronautics and Space Admin.	7	1346
266	Securities and Exchange Commission	1	31
285	Commerce Records Relating to International Commercial Operations (see RG 489)	6	145
286	U.S. Agency for International Development	945	7937
298	Office of Naval Research	130	645
306	U.S. Information Agency	212	1276
313	Naval Operating Forces	766	7560
319	Army Staff	1741	17372
326	Atomic Energy Commission	88	1322
330	Office of the Secretary of Defense	1299	7222
335	Office of the Secretary of the Army	84	1030
338	U.S. Army Operational, Tactical and Support Organizations	1927	2943
340	Office of the Secretary of the Air Force	171	2784
341	HQ U.S. Air Force (Air Staff)	670	6971
342	U.S. Air Force Commands, Activities, and Organizations	581	8866

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

343	Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR)	446	7349
344	Naval Ship Systems Command (NAVSEA)	420	6653
349	Joint Commands	67	101
373	Defense Intelligence Agency	119	662
383	U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency	89	321
402	Bureau of Naval Weapons	150	4626
407	Records of the Adjutant General's Office	47	292
428	General Records of the Department of the Navy	139	1175
429	Records of Organizations in Executive Office of the President (Federal Records)	32	370
430	Energy Research and Development Agency	2	5
434	Department of Energy	4	114
449	Independent Counsels	189	1707
460	Watergate Special Prosecution Force	2	4
518	U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)	128	430
529	U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM)	9	3
530	U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)	4	4
531	U.S. European Command (EUCOM)	39	333
549	U.S. Army, Europe (USAREUR)	49	208
550	U.S. Army, Pacific (USARPAC)	86	318
			151,793 cuft

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

Category 3 Record Groups (Low Interest, Easy to Process)

RG	Title	Entries	Volume
15	Veterans Affairs	1	4
21	District Courts	1	1
31	Federal Housing Administration	1	5
37	Hydrographic Office	3	103
39	Bureau of Accounts (Treasury)	1	7
40	Commerce	65	383
48	Interior	5	11
50	Treasurer of the U.S.	1	1
57	U.S. Geological Survey	1	24
64	National Archives and Records Administration	7	26
70	Bureau of Mines	1	1
80	General Records of the Department of the Navy	2	9
85	Immigration and Naturalization Service	14	235
87	Secret Service	5	30
90	Public Health Service	2	2
118	United States Attorneys	3	227
125	Judge Advocate General (Navy)	11	25
131	Office of Alien Property	2	1
143	Bureau of Supplies and Accounts	1	17
151	Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce	83	164
166	Foreign Agricultural Service	5	14
167	National Institute of Standards and Technology	5	10
168	National Guard Bureau	1	1
173	Federal Communications Commission	3	14
174	Department of Labor	9	9
185	Panama Canal	2	24
197	Civil Aeronautics Board	6	30
203	Chief of Finance (Army)	5	10
216	Office of Censorship	2	3
220	Temporary Committees, Commissions and Boards	18	91
227	Office of Scientific Research and Development	1	1
237	Federal Aviation Administration	19	190
242	Collection of Foreign Records Seized	5	7
257	Bureau of Labor Statistics	1	4

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

303	National Council on Marine Resources and Engineering Development	1	5
307	National Science Foundation	1	1
311	Records of the FEMA	2	9
333	International Military Agencies	47	288
361	Records of the Defense Logistics Agency	2	7
368	Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service	1	1
375	Bureau of Economic Analysis	6	8
377	U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration	1	2
378	Economic Development Administration	2	1
389	Provost Marshal General	1	1
396	Office of Emergency Preparedness	6	14
406	Federal Highway Administration	1	1
412	Records of the Environmental Protection Agency	1	9
417	National Telecommunications and Information Administration	15	104
420	Records of the Overseas Private Investment Corp.	7	56
425	Financial Management Service	1	19
432	Economic Stabilization Programs	1	1
469	U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies	16	91
489	International Trade Administration	13	46
490	Peace Corps	10	45
509	Department of Defense Inspector General	6	29
			2,422 cuft

THE NATIONAL DECLASSIFICATION CENTER
Releasing All We Can, Protecting What We Must

Category 4 Record Groups (Low Interest, Difficult to Process)

RG	Title	Entries	Volume
51	Office of Management and Budget	68	330
56	Department of the Treasury	166	1118
71	Bureau of Yards and Docks	17	201
112	Records of the Surgeon General (Army)	67	697
287	Publications of the U.S. Government	1	4
289	Naval Intelligence Command	46	369
291	Federal Property Resources Service	1	53
333	International Military Agencies	47	288
334	Interservice Agencies	319	600
345	Naval Electronic Systems Command (NAVELEX)	72	394
346	Naval Ordnance Systems Command (NAVORD)	23	385
347	Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP)	5	11
353	Interdepartmental and Intradepartmental Committees (State)	8	88
357	Maritime Administration (MARAD)	6	39
364	Office of the U.S. Trade Representative	18	260
371	Defense Information Systems Agency	209	702
374	Defense Nuclear Agency/ Defense Threat Reduction Agency	157	1225
384	Chief of Naval Material (NAVMAT)	30	85
385	Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC)	2	11
411	General Accounting Office	2	1
456	Defense Mapping Agency	166	814
476	Bureau of Export Administration	116	498
526	Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS)	5	36
544	U.S. Army Material Command	555	1702
546	Continental Army Command (CONARC) (modern)	124	542
547	U.S. Army Forces in Alaska	10	34
548	U.S. Army Forces in the Caribbean	35	58
551	U.S. Army Military District of Washington (MDW)	3	3
552	Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC)	14	18
553	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)	30	66
554	General HQs, Far East Command, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, & United Nations Command (FECOM, SCAP, UNC)	185	803
555	U.S. Army Forces Command (FORCECOM)	4	4
			11,439 cuft