

Bi-annual Report on Operations of the National Declassification Center
Reporting period: July 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012

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

Executive Summary: As we explain in the final sections of each NDC report, **Status of Workload and Production**, our first measurable milestone metric for the backlog is the “Total pages assessed for quality assurance.” As predicted in the last NDC Report, we have now completed all assessment analysis of the backlog. All backlog series are in the proper queue for the final quality review and processing stages; many have completed all processes. NARA NDC and our other government agency partners have made fine progress, and those metrics are reported in the final section of this report.

As we have noted in previous NDC reports, our greatest challenge is satisfying the requirements for Restricted Data/Formerly Restricted Data (RD/FRD) mandated in the National Defense Authorization Acts for Fiscal Year 1999 and 2000 (Public Laws 105-261 and 106-65 respectively) and the Special Historical Records Review Plan Supplement to those two public laws. Although we are making significant progress, nearly 100 million backlog records still require some version of page-level review, a “highly unlikely” certification, or additional documentation as to their Kyl-Lott review status. This substantial number continues to impact any orderly plan we might have implemented for processing collections based on requester interest and demand. To address this challenge most efficiently, in late 2011, the NDC implemented a page-level review process in an inter-agency effort aimed at the more potentially sensitive series; we continue a more expedited approach for identifying those series that could qualify as highly unlikely to contain RD/FRD as well. We are currently looking at ways to further streamline our approach or expand staffing in order to meet the approaching deadline of December 31, 2013.

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

In The Strategic Plan of the National Archives and Records Administration, 2006 – 2016 (revised 2009), the Archivist singled out this inter-agency center as reflecting “the ongoing challenge to balance the needs of national security and the right of citizens to have access to the records of their Government.”

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

Highlights:

Openness and Public Comment:

- The September 2011 U.S. National Action Plan crafted by the Open Government Partnership described NDC goals and our public-facing interaction. Along with the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO), we participated in a very informative interchange with members of Open the Government and the Constitution Project in November 2012. The exchange gave us the opportunity to explain our processes and challenges, update them on our successes, and entertain the concerns of these two important public-interest groups.
- We held our yearly NDC Public Forum in August to address how the center is meeting the requirements of E.O. 13526. Our speakers from NARA NDC, ISOO, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Department of Energy (DOE), and the Joint Staff (JCS), spoke to past weaknesses in the system that prompted that E.O. and Presidential Memorandum, the present processes that we have implemented to address those weaknesses, and methodologies that could address future government-wide declassification.
- We continue to invite public comments and suggestions by way of the [NDC Blog](#) and website: <http://archives.gov/declassification>. During the reporting period, we provided information about newly released entries, and highlighted specific historical documents that we recently completed processing, such as records of awards bestowed on foreign nationals, a popular document about UFOs, and records associated with the World War II Katyn Forest Massacre.

Review:

- In September, we supported a release event with Congress persons Marcy Kaptur and Daniel Lipinski commemorating the World War II Katyn Massacre. With the assistance of CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Department of Justice (DOJ), FBI, Department of State, Army, and JCS for EUCOM equities, we had completed special declassification review and processing of a thematic collection of records related to Katyn. This review effort, in conjunction with work by other National Archives units, led to an expanded web release, detailed researcher page, and a commemorative booklet as well as the release event at the Capitol Visitors Center.

- Although we have de-emphasized the page-by-page equity review for referrals in the NDC Interagency Referral Center in order to free up other government agency resources to address page-level RD/FRD review, participation, albeit reduced, in the IRC has continued. During the six-month reporting period (July 1 – December 31, 2012), equity review for 34,000 referred pages was completed. Of those pages, 22,000 pages were declassified and 12,000 pages were exempted for still-sensitive national security information or excluded for RD/FRD. The IRC operation will take on an expanded role during 2013 as we begin applying 50- and 75-year automatic declassification guidelines, stand up an automated referral notification system, and prioritize additional special collections.
- Through the NDC, the Presidential Libraries prioritized 1,830,086 pages within certain collections of the Truman through Carter Administrations, as well as the China-associated materials within the Kissinger Personal Paper Collection, for completion of referral review through the Remote Archives Capture (RAC) project. As of December 31, 2012, equity-holding agencies had completed review on 1,330,983 of those pages, and of those, 880,591 pages were delivered to the pertinent libraries. In 2013, the NDC will prioritize 566,724 additional pages of Presidential Libraries records for review. RAC-reviewed pages are *not* reported as part of the Federal accessioned-records backlog in the **Status of the Workload and Production** portion below.

Process Improvement:

- Our Metrics Team continued to provide end-to-end tracking for all NDC operations, and our current numbers reflect their continuing clean up and analysis of our data. The work of this team is allowing us to pinpoint chokepoints in our processes, report more accurate production statistics, and work toward streamlining all of our data capture efforts.
- The NDC Freedom of Information Act/Mandatory Declassification Review Division continues to benefit from the improved work processes established during the last year. The effectiveness of these improved work processes is reflected in our metrics: During FY 2011, we closed 776 cases totaling 61,833 pages; of these, 653 cases were for FOIA and MDR requests, 55 were for special ‘expedited’ requests, and 68 were for deck logs of the US Navy. During FY 2012, we closed 1308 cases totaling 167,506 pages; of these, 910 cases were for FOIA and MDR requests, 221 were for special requests, and 177 were deck logs. For first quarter FY 2013, we have already closed 288 cases and requests totaling 79,411 pages. In addition to digitizing case documents for ease of external referral review, we have expanded communication between staff members and requesters to assist the latter in targeting their requests. As more backlog records are processed through the NDC and opened to researchers, we anticipate an increase in focused, document-based requests, increased ease at responding to

short-turn around requests, and an eventual reduction in large requests for unprocessed records.

- E.O. 13526 directed the NDC “to streamline declassification processes, facilitate quality-assurance measures, and implement standardized training.” That final prong is being addressed by an NDC curriculum, consisting of web-based and instructor-led course modules currently in their final stage of development with a goal of educating cleared declassification reviewers, records managers, access and security professionals on the historical background to declassification requirements and the executive orders, proper document handling, general agency responsibilities, and equity identification.

Interagency Cooperation:

- During the six-month reporting period, agency personnel from Army, JCS, US Air Force, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD/WHS), National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA), National Security Agency (NSA), CIA, DIA, and DOE participated in Evaluation (sampling) and/or Kyl Evaluation (RD/FRD page-level review) Team activities, frequently providing staffing for up to two inter-agency teams per day/four days each week and providing consistent assistance to Kyl page-level review efforts even for those records typically unlikely to contain their own equities. During this reporting period, Navy expanded its reviewing presence at College Park, and has been participating on the inter-agency Kyl Evaluation Team, as well as tackling a 39 million page subset of its more technical records for both RD/FRD and equity referral. Some primary agencies, such as USAF, with 9.5 million pages still needing the Kyl review, and Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) with 2.5 million pages, have focused on their own records. Since the establishment of the Kyl Evaluation Team process in 2011, more than 27 million pages have been addressed using this inter-agency model. Once the review for RD/FRD has been completed, the series are moved to the final indexing/segregation stage of our process to make them publically available.
- In addition, the following agencies supported further Quality Assurance activities: Department of State, NGA, OSD/WHS, NSA, DIA, JCS, CIA, Navy and DOE.
- To provide the public certain collections in a more timely fashion, we are working with pertinent agencies on targeted referral reviews in order to address those series heavily exempted in the past but assessed to be less sensitive currently. For example, DIA, CIA, and State have been addressing targeted equity adjudication on records related to POW/MIA information. We hope to have a significant collection of POW/MIA-associated series made available during 2013.

- The NDC Advisory Panel, consisting of office-level heads from the Intelligence, Defense, Law Enforcement, and Diplomatic Communities, met in December to discuss agency resource challenges and 2013 review goals.
- We hosted a meeting with the Department of State Advisory Committee on Historic Diplomatic Documentation in December to talk about our processes and review priorities. We also participated in several State-NARA meetings relating to the declassification and transfer of the multiple components of the Department of State Central Foreign Policy Files.

Status of Workload and Production:

Because of the increased maturity of our metrics program, we are better able to report our accomplishments. This expanded capability has affected all our numbers, from the initial backlog reported to the status of the various stages of processing. With that in mind, unless otherwise indicated, we are reporting cumulative production using a reporting period of January 1, 2010 (establishment of the NDC by E.O.) to December 31, 2012. These production numbers reflect the number of backlog pages evaluated in the NDC for referral quality review. A subset of these pages has been declassified and is available for public use. The remaining pages that have completed NDC referral quality evaluation are in the NDC final indexing queue, have been excluded for RD/FRD sensitivities, or have been exempted from automatic declassification by an agency.

Between July and December 2012, the NDC focused on releasing records from the Department of Defense. This included documents from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Office of the Secretary, and JCS. Also released were records from civilian agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development and DOJ. Additional information on these and other releases is provided on [our website](#).

- Total backlog pages as of NDC stand up on January 1, 2010: 361.1 million pages (vice 370.9 million pages reported in the last report. This new number is based on our ability to continually analyze and deconflict the available data and research the type of containers and records affected.)
- Total pages assessed for quality assurance (January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2012): 361.1 million pages.
- Total pages successfully completing the NDC referral quality review process for national security information, including meeting the “Kyl-Lott” requirements (January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2012): 226 million pages.
 - Total pages that have completed all processing: 93.7 million pages.
 - Total pages released to the public January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2012: 57 million pages (61% release rate).

- Total assessed backlog pages requiring referral quality review processing as of December 31, 2012: 135 million pages.