

Public Interest Declassification Board

Information Security Oversight Office

Protect • Inform • Assess



May 8, 2015

Public Interest Declassification Board

- Advisory group (most senior-levels of government and private sector)
 - Created to promote “the fullest possible public access to a thorough, accurate, and reliable documentary record of significant ... national security decisions and ... activities.”
 - Advises the President and other executive branch officials on the identification, collection, review for declassification and release of declassified records and materials of archival value.
 - Advises the President and other executive branch officials on policies deriving from the issuance by the President of Executive orders regarding the classification and declassification of national security information.

Enabling Legislation

- Established by the Public Interest Declassification Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-567, Title VII, Dec. 27, 2000, 114 Stat. 2856).
- Modified and extended by:
 - Public Law 113–126- Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal year 2014
 - Section 311 extends the Public Interest Declassification Act of 2000 until 2018.
 - Public Law 111–259- Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010
 - Section 365 improves the review authority of the PIDB.
 - Public Law 112–235 -Public Interest Declassification Board Reauthorization Act of 2012
 - Section 2 extends the Public Interest Declassification Act of 2000 until 2014 and amends the appointments of members.
 - Public Law 110–53- Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007
 - Section 602(2) of the Act provides the PIDB authority to make reviews and recommendations.
 - Public Law 108–458 -Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004
 - Section 1102 of the Act provides an extension and improvement authorities of the PIDB.

Membership of the PIDB

- Officially composed of nine individuals:
 - Five appointed by the President.
 - Four appointed by Congressional leaders:
 - One each by the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House as well as the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate.
- Appointees are U.S. citizens who are preeminent in the fields of history, national security, foreign policy, intelligence policy, social science, law, or archives.
- Director of ISOO serves as Executive Secretary of the PIDB.
 - ISOO staff provides all support for the PIDB's work.

Current Members

- Presidential appointees:
 - Laura A. DeBonis
 - William H. Leary (Acting Chair)
 - Nancy E. Soderberg
 - Solomon B. Watson, IV

- Congressional appointees:
 - William O. Studeman, appointed by the Speaker of the House
 - Sanford J. Ungar, appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate
 - Kenneth L. Wainstein, appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate

2007 *Improving Declassification* Report

- 2007 Report focused on improving declassification.
 - Addressed 15 issues and contained 49 recommendations, including creating a National Declassification Center and prioritizing the review of records to focus on “historically significant” records.
 - Several recommendations were later enacted in E.O. 13526, including establishment of the National Declassification Center.

- Presidential tasking:
 - As a result of the 2007 Report, the President tasked the PIDB to “design a more fundamental transformation of the security classification system.”
 - Tasking is part of a study undertaken in cooperation with the National Security Advisor .
 - Part of Presidential memorandum entitled Implementation of the Executive Order “Classified National Security Information,” (December 29, 2009).

2012 *Transforming the Security Classification System* Report

- 2012 Report focused on transforming the security classification system for the digital age.
 - Addressed 14 recommendations concerning classification, declassification and the use of technology to reform and modernize the system.
 - Primary recommendation for a White House led Steering Committee adopted in 2014.
 - Classification Reform Committee has focused its efforts on piloting technology solutions in support of improved declassification and reforming the treatment of historical nuclear information (Formerly Restricted Data).
 - Both of these stemmed from recommendations made by the PIDB and are now commitments made in the President's Second Open Government National Action Plan.

2014 *Setting Priorities* Report

- 2014 Report focused on topic-based declassification prioritization.
 - Supplemental Report built on recommendations from earlier 2012 report on *Transforming the Security Classification System*.
 - Involved stakeholders in a process to identify topics for prioritization.
 - Focused on reviewing those topics and records of highest interest first.
 - Six recommendations:
 1. Topic-based declassification should be the normal process rather than the exception.
 2. The National Declassification Center, in consultation with the public and with agencies, should design and implement a process to solicit, evaluate and prioritize standard topics for declassification government-wide.
 3. End pass/fail determinations and identify necessary redactions for topic-based reviews.
 4. The government should require agencies to develop and use new technologies to assist and improve declassification review.
 5. Agencies and the National Declassification Center must improve risk management practices.
 6. Revisions to the current Executive Order are needed to lessen the burden of automatic declassification on agencies in support of topic-based declassification review.

Current PIDB Initiatives

- Continues investigating, soliciting comments, and making recommendations to support 2012 report.
 - Continues the public discussion of the transformation through its blog, *Transforming Classification* .
 - Supports declassification proposals involving high value historical records, including collections at the Presidential Libraries.
 - Seeks consensus on the declassification of obsolete historical nuclear policy information
- Integrating and using technology in declassification review.
 - Technology study underway that includes founding a working group of agency technologists to understand and make recommendations for technological solutions in support of declassification.
- Assists the White House-led Steering Committee as they lead and manage the implementation of reforms.

Web Resources

- Public Interest Declassification Board:
 - <http://www.archives.gov/declassification/pidb>
- Reports and recommendations:
 - <http://www.archives.gov/declassification/pidb/recommendations/>
- *Transforming Classification* Blog:
 - <http://blogs.archives.gov/transformingclassification/>

Questions?