

# **National Declassification Initiative: Public Interest Declassification Board Briefing**

Michael J. Kurtz

Assistant Archivist for Records Services,  
Washington, DC



# Agenda

- Overview
  - Desired Outcomes
  - Initial Goals
  - Completed and Ongoing Activities
  - Future Activities
- Major Challenges
  - Referrals
  - Commonly Accepted Standards for Review
  - Quality Assurance and Collaborative Decisionmaking
  - Prioritization
- Questions for the Public Interest Community

# Overview:

## Desired Outcome

What is the desired outcome for the NDI?

- NARA seeks to establish a better means for managing referrals of classified equities between Executive Branch agencies.
- NARA will accomplish this by:
  - Integrating more effectively the declassification processes between agencies
  - Integrating more effectively the declassification processes within other work processes, like records management within agencies; and
  - Establishing better management controls on declassification processes overall.

# Overview:

## Initial Goals of NDI

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- Reduce redundancies in declassification reviews.
- Promote accurate and consistent declassification decisions.
- Improve equity recognition across the declassification community.
- Develop centralized priorities and management controls around the priorities.
- Make the declassification process more transparent to the public.

# Overview:

## NDI Accomplishments to Date

- Established an inter-agency NDI Executive Steering Group.
  - Conducted kick-off meeting in late August.
  - Scheduled 2nd meeting on FY 2007 work plan priorities for late September.
- Drafted internal NARA action plan.
  - Contains Immediate, Intermediate, and Long-Term Actions to deliver larger outcome and deal with initial goals.
  - Will finalize plan by September 8<sup>th</sup>.

# Overview: Future Activities

- Develop strategic, inter-agency solution to the declassification challenge. Some tactics will include:
  - Develop new and enhanced declassification training for equity recognition.
  - Integrate existing information security/declassification control systems and/or develop better integrated systems for same purpose.
  - Integrate declassification processes into records management processes in agencies.
  - Prepare for declassification of non-textual records.
  - Raise awareness of the declassification management issue within agencies, across the government (beyond declassification programs), and with the public.

# Major Challenges: Referral Workload

- **HOW BIG:**
  - 170,916 boxes of classified textual records.
- **HOW IS IT GROWING:**
  - 5K to 10K boxes more material per year.
- **ACCOMPLISHMENT:**
  - 13,965 boxes in approximately 18 months of work in the Interagency Referral Center.
- **MANAGEMENT:**
  - Need to develop/implement management controls.

# Major Challenges: Review Standards

- Need clear, easy to use declassification manuals for all agencies.
- Need enhanced training for agency reviewers for equity identification.
- Establish an interagency quality assurance process that:
  - Protects sensitive information
  - Improves agency review decisions
  - Improves management of agency review decisions
  - Reduces the need for re-review
  - Puts open records on the open shelves



# Major Challenges:

## Quality Assurance & Collaborative Decisionmaking

### Four Step Process:

1. Agency Re-Review
2. NARA Survey
3. NDI Survey
4. Final Survey

# Major Challenges: Prioritization

- All agencies are attempting to comply with EO 12958, as amended.
- While we pursue tactics and larger strategic solutions, NARA needs to prioritize its workload, balancing the EO with ongoing researcher needs.
- What should NARA's first priorities for declassification be?