

**AUDIT OF THE CONTROLS OVER  
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY TEXTUAL RECORDS**

**OIG Report No. 09-01**

**January 14, 2009**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Presidential Library system is comprised of twelve Presidential Libraries nationwide. This network of libraries is administered by the Office of Presidential Libraries (NL), which is part of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), located in College Park, MD. Documents received from the President or his representatives, or acquired from other sources, are to be added to the collection of the library and responsible care is to be provided for them at all times. These are not traditional libraries, but rather repositories for preserving and making available the papers, records, and other historical materials of U.S. Presidents since Herbert Hoover.

In FY 2007 the Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of the controls over artifacts at Presidential Libraries. During the commencement of field work for that audit the OIG received an inquiry from United States Senator Charles Grassley's office asking us to conduct an audit of the actions taken by Presidential Libraries in order to protect and preserve Presidential collections. This audit, focusing on the controls over Presidential library textual records, was conducted to fulfill Senator Grassley's request and compliments our previous audit on the controls over Presidential library artifacts.<sup>1</sup>

This audit revealed that controls over Presidential Library textual records, in general, appear to be adequate and properly functioning. However, we found that controls can be improved over a subset of records, known as Specially Protected Records (SPRs)<sup>2</sup>, which are subject to more stringent controls because they are deemed highly valuable and vulnerable.

Auditors were able to identify and account for all textual records, including Specially Protected Records, sampled at the five Presidential Libraries visited. Auditors observed that libraries followed established guidelines governing the removal and tracking of these records. This included the use of charge cards/out markers, withdrawal sheets, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) markers, and preservation copies, to identify the removal of original material and record where it had been relocated within the library. Libraries also maintained numerous electronic databases and files, including detailed FOIA case files, that track records as they are moved throughout the library and aided in their location. Auditors observed and tested research room controls and also found these to be adequate and properly functioning.

Regarding SPRs the audit revealed (a) Presidential Libraries are not in compliance with several requirements contained in NARA 1572, *Security for NARA Holdings*, which provides guidance concerning the security and handling of SPRs; (b) the Security Management Branch (NASS) has not inspected/certified SPR storage areas, and; (c)

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<sup>1</sup> OIG Audit Report No. 08-01, *Audit of the Process of Safeguarding and Accounting for Presidential Library Artifacts* (October 26, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Specially Protected Records are those records that knowledgeable archival staff deem (1) especially vulnerable to theft (because of high intrinsic or historic value); (2) in extremely fragile condition, or; (3) likely targets of vandalism. Specially Protected Records are supposed to be removed from the general collection (and replaced by a photocopy for research purposes), subject to greater security, and in some instances controlled and accounted for at the item (e.g. document) level.

current guidance is not adequate for ensuring accountability of SPRs at Presidential Libraries via sampling.

Like most textual records in NARA's custody, the majority of Presidential textual records are not controlled and accounted for at the item level. The Office of Presidential Libraries states that item level control would be considered archaic by archival standards and require a massive amount of resources. The Presidential Libraries do exercise box and folder level control through a number of descriptive tools such as lists of holdings, accession registers, and various finding aids. NARA 1572 allows the highly valuable subset of Presidential library textual records, known as SPRs, to also be controlled at the box or folder level. In such instances, libraries may not be able to identify missing individual SPRs. Management has stated that this is an inherent risk which they are willing to accept. Finally, as noted in a previous OIG audit<sup>3</sup> concerning Specially Protected Records and Artifacts, while libraries have taken steps to identify SPRs, not all SPR's have been identified. According to the prior audit this is an issue related to resources and competing demands, and one which will not be remedied anytime soon.

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<sup>3</sup> OIG Audit Report No. 07-01, *Audit of Management Controls for Safeguarding NARA's Specially Protected Records and Artifacts Stored in Secured Stacks, Vaults, and Safes* (October 12, 2006).

## Background

Title 44 of the *United States Code*, Chapter 21, provides that the Archivist of the United States may accept for deposit, in a Presidential archival depository, the papers and other historical materials of a President or former President of the United States. Chapter 22 defines Presidential records as documentary material, or any reasonably segregable portion thereof, created or received by the President or his immediate staff, or a unit or individual of the Executive Office of the President whose function it is to advise and assist the President, in the course of conducting activities which relate to or have an effect upon the carrying out of the constitutional, statutory, or other official or ceremonial duties of the President. Title 44 also provides that the Archivist of the United States shall assume responsibility for the custody, control, preservation of, and access to, Presidential Records and such records will be deposited in a Presidential archival depository (e.g. Presidential Library). The Presidential Libraries Act of 1955 and 1986 establishes the Presidential Library system and defines what the Archivist can accept in terms of a facility and materials. Section C states that with respect to papers, documents, or other historical materials deposited under this section, or otherwise, in a Presidential archival depository, the Archivist may exercise all the functions and responsibilities otherwise vested in him pertaining to Federal records or other documentary materials in his custody or under his control.

The Assistant Archivist of Presidential Libraries is responsible for (1) Planning, directing, and coordinating comprehensive programs for the acquisition, storage, preservation, review, servicing, and disposal of Presidential records, Federal records, and donated historical materials in Presidential Libraries and Presidential materials projects, and; (2) Developing policies and procedures for the management and operation of Presidential Libraries and Presidential materials projects. Presidential Libraries are responsible for establishing physical and management controls over the records, including the storage, arrangement, and security of historical records and the space housing them. Guidelines and procedures for the operation of Presidential Libraries are contained in the *Presidential Libraries Manual* (Libraries 1401).

In January 2006, NARA issued NARA 1572 – *Security for NARA Holdings*, establishing policy on security for NARA holdings. The directive informs staff of measures NARA must take to protect materials in the National Archives. It also identifies a subset of textual records, referred to as Specially Protected Records (SPRs) – or those especially vulnerable to theft, in extremely fragile condition, or likely targets of vandalism – and provides an additional level of procedures and physical controls intended to better protect these records.

## Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The objective of this audit was to determine if sufficient management controls exist to safeguard and account for Presidential library textual records. The review was conducted at Archives II in College Park, MD., with representatives from the Office of Presidential Libraries (NL), Policy and Planning Staff (NPOL), and Space and Security Management Division (NAS). We visited five Presidential Libraries and museums – George Bush, William Jefferson Clinton, Richard Nixon (College Park, MD. location), Ronald Reagan, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. We also augmented information obtained during our site visits with questionnaire information obtained from all 12 Presidential Libraries.<sup>4</sup>

To accomplish our objectives we reviewed applicable NARA guidance, including Libraries 1401, *Presidential Libraries Manual*; NARA 101, *NARA Organization and Delegation of Authority*; NARA 1571, *Archival Storage Standards*; NARA 1572, *Security for NARA Holdings*; NARA 1702, *Transporting Holdings in NARA's Physical and Legal Custody*, and; Interim Guidance 1600-4, *Research Application Procedures*. Additionally, we reviewed federal guidance contained in Title 44, Chapters 21 and 22 of the *United States Code*. We reviewed performance measures related to records stored in appropriate space as well as information developed by NL in response to an inquiry from Senator Grassley's office. We reviewed internal operating procedures for reviewing Presidential records and responding to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and performed limited sampling at the five libraries we visited. Judgmental sampling was used to verify (1) records removed and relocated during the conduct of daily operations could be accounted for and (2) procedural controls put into place to ensure accountability were adequate and properly followed. We also met with staff from the Space and Security Management Division to review documentation relating to Specially Protected Records which they are required to maintain. Finally, we met with Policy and Planning staff involved in the drafting of NARA 1572 to gain clarification on specific requirements in the guidance.

This performance audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) between April 2008 and October 2008. These standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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<sup>4</sup> See table in Appendix A for summary of responses.

### Controls Over Presidential Library Textual Records in General Appear to be Adequate

Our review revealed controls over textual Presidential records appear to be adequate and properly functioning. At the five libraries visited, auditors were able to account for all sampled textual records. In each case, auditors found appropriate documentation in place of the removed material allowing for its identification and location. Auditors also observed libraries maintained numerous databases used to identify and track material which had been removed from the original collection. Libraries covered by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) – Ronald Reagan, William Jefferson Clinton, and George Bush Libraries – maintained especially robust databases for tracking documents disassociated from the original collection as a result of processing in response to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Auditors were able to use these databases to locate and identify sampled records.

Auditors also found the controls over research rooms appear to be adequate and properly functioning. Specifically, auditors found research rooms were adequately staffed; had adequate camera coverage; were arranged to allow line of sight observation of researchers; had “clean” research room rules limiting what researchers could bring into the research room; maintained current researcher application files, and; maintained a current list of researchers banned from NARA research rooms.

### Presidential Libraries Are Not Adhering to Security Guidelines for Specially Protected Records

Our review revealed Presidential Libraries are not in compliance with certain aspects of security guidelines established for especially valuable records defined as Specially Protected Records (SPRs). This condition can be attributed to (1) a lack of oversight and monitoring by both the Office of Presidential Libraries and the Space and Security Division and (2) a lack of familiarity with, or understanding of, the established requirements for each of the individual libraries. NARA 1572, *Security for NARA Holdings*, establishes policy and procedures for securing NARA holdings, especially material needing special protection because it has been identified as especially valuable or vulnerable. As a result of this condition, NARA lacks assurance the subset of Presidential records identified as especially valuable or vulnerable are being safeguarded in a manner commensurate with their status.

SPRs are defined as those considered especially vulnerable to theft, deterioration, or vandalism and, as such, are subject to more rigorous security. SPRs encompass documents such as Franklin Roosevelt’s “Day of Infamy” speech containing his handwritten notes and changes, John F. Kennedy’s handwritten draft of his 1961 Inaugural Address in which he stated “Ask not what your country can do for you...”, and the annotated speech card Ronald Reagan used to deliver his remarks at the Brandenburg gate in 1987 (see Appendix B for photos of records illustrative of SPRs).

During library site visits the auditor found libraries were not in compliance with requirements pertaining to the control of SPRs contained in NARA 1572. Specifically, the auditor found Presidential Libraries had not:

- Nominated for background checks selected staff who required access to vaults or other specially protected areas (nominations to be sent to NASS);
- Reported their storage methods, exact container locations, and names of staff with access to Specially Protected holding to NASS, and;
- Consistently maintained itemized lists of “unique record items.”

As a result of these observations the auditor sought to obtain from NASS documentation which they are required by NARA 1572 to maintain. The auditor found NASS did not have documentation nominating staff for background checks from any of the libraries and only one (-redacted under FOIA exemption “high” b(2)-) had reported their storage methods and exact container locations. Additionally, the auditor obtained program review checklists for five libraries for FY 2007 and FY 2008 and found two had erroneously reported they were in compliance with the requirement to report storage methods and locations and one erroneously reported they were in compliance with the requirement to report personnel with access to Specially Protected Areas. On August 21, 2008, during the conduct of this audit, the auditor was informed by NASS that three libraries had submitted the required information and a fourth, -----  
-----redacted under FOIA exemption “high” b(2)-----  
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Of the five libraries visited, three did not maintain an itemized list of “unique record items” in accordance with guidance established for controlling SPRs. The lack of an itemized list complicates efforts to control and account for SPRs and made it difficult and time consuming for the auditor to determine the universe of SPRs from which to sample.

The auditor also surveyed all twelve Presidential Libraries and followed up with NASS and found<sup>5</sup>

- Three (25%) had nominated for background checks or reported staff with access to SPRs to NASS (at the commencement of this audit no libraries were in compliance)
- Five (42%) had reported their storage methods and exact container locations to NASS (at the commencement of this audit only one library was in compliance)
- Five (42%) reported that they maintained an itemized list of SPRs.

The lack of compliance with NARA policy for safeguarding Specially Protected Records is attributable to a lack of oversight and monitoring by both the Office of Presidential Libraries and the Space and Security Management Division; and unfamiliarity with the guidance at the individual Presidential Libraries. Furthermore, neither NARA 1572 nor NASS guidance defined the level of background checks required for staff to access SPR storage areas and the frequency with which background checks should occur.

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<sup>5</sup> A table summarizing survey responses can be found in Appendix A – Survey Summary.

NARA 1572 requires the Office of Presidential Libraries to (1) develop and implement standard operating procedures for each storage area where materials requiring special protection are kept, and; (2) nominate for background checks selected staff required to access vaults or other specially protected areas.

Furthermore, NARA 1572.12 (b) states that custodial units report their storage methods and exact container locations to NAS to compile and maintain a central list of all specially protected storage areas and containers. NARA 1572.12 (d) requires the creation and maintenance of an itemized list of documents needing special protection, and further requires the list to be secured and access to it controlled, and; NARA 1572.18 states the names of persons with access to specially protected areas are to be forwarded to NASS.

Required procedures, intended to safeguard records identified as highly valuable and therefore more likely targets of theft, have not been implemented. As a result, NARA lacks assurance this subset of Presidential records (e.g. Specially Protected Records) are being maintained and safeguarded in a manner consistent with their status.

### **Recommendation 1**

The Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries should ensure all libraries, in accordance with NARA 1572:

- a. develop and implement standard operating procedures for each records storage area where materials requiring special protection are kept;
- b. nominate selected staff for background checks required to access vaults or other specially protected areas (and submit the list to NASS);
- c. report storage methods and exact container locations to NASS;
- d. report the names of staff with access to specially protected records to NASS, and;
- e. maintain inventories of SPRs.

### **Management Response**

Management concurred with our recommendation. Specific action on the recommendation will be deferred until a comprehensive revision of NARA 1572 is completed.



**Recommendation 2**

Either the Director of the Policy and Planning Staff (NPOL) should revise NARA 1572 to include specific information concerning the timing and level of background checks required of staff with access to SPR storage areas, or the Assistant Archivist for Administrative Services (NA) should ensure the Security Management Branch (NASS) develop standard operating procedures for SPR background checks to augment current guidance.

**Management Response**

Management concurred with our recommendation. Specific action on the recommendation will be deferred until a comprehensive revision of NARA 1572 is completed.

**The Security Management Branch (NASS) has not Conducted Inspections of Specially Protected Records Holding Areas**

Our review revealed the Security Management Branch (NASS) had not conducted inspections of any Specially Protected Records holding areas since the establishment of the requirement in January 2006. NASS attributed this to a lack of resources and competing demands. While NARA 1572 requires NASS to conduct such inspections, it does not provide a timeframe in which such inspections should occur. As a result of not inspecting SPR holding areas NARA cannot ensure SPRs are adequately safeguarded.

Based on site visits, questionnaire responses, and a review of NASS records, the auditor found NASS had not conducted inspections of SPR holding areas. Furthermore, as previously noted in this report, information concerning SPR storage methods and locations had not been reported by the libraries to NAS (the division in which NASS is located). NASS has developed a checklist for inspecting SPR holding areas and compliance with NARA 1572, however, a NASS management official informed the auditor that due to resource constraints and competing demands he was unsure when such inspections would occur or be completed. NARA 1572.13 (e) requires NASS conduct inspections of SPR storage areas as part of the cycle of security and workplace inspections. While this does not specify a timeframe in which such inspections must occur, the Office of Inspector General believes that initial certifications of SPR storage areas should occur within a reasonable timeframe in order to ensure that SPR storage areas comply with NASS guidelines. While we acknowledge additional demands recently placed upon NASS by HSPD-12 and preparations for the Bush W. Bush library, the requirement for establishment and inspection of SPR storage areas has been in place since January 2006. If NASS is unable to physically conduct inspections of SPR storage areas in the near future then perhaps initial certifications could be conducted remotely, with libraries sending pictures of their storage areas and descriptions of their

construction, access controls, locations, and any other information necessary for NASS to review and certify the areas remotely.

As a result of the lack of inspections and initial certifications NARA cannot be certain SPRs are being maintained in a secure environment that meets NASS standards and that SPRs are afforded a level of protection commensurate with their status.

**Recommendation 3**

The Assistant Archivist for Administrative Services (NA) should ensure that the Security Management Branch (NASS) conduct reviews and initial certifications of SPR storage areas in a timely manner. Criteria for the evaluation of SPR storage areas should be clearly articulated and the method by which the evaluations will occur (if other than inspection) should be documented. A provision should also be made ensuring results are clearly documented and transmitted to the library, including any recommended remedial action.

**Management Response**

Management concurred with our recommendation. Specific action on the recommendation will be deferred until a comprehensive revision of NARA 1572 is completed.

**Presidential Libraries Do Not Use Sampling to Account for Specially Protected Records**

The Office of Presidential Libraries (NL) does not conduct inspections to verify and account for Specially Protected Records. Unlike the Office of Regional Records Services (NR) and Office of Records Services, Washington D.C. (NW), Presidential Libraries are not required by NARA 1572 to conduct annual inspections and sampling to account for a percentage of their SPRs. As a result, SPRs in NL are not subject to the same level of accountability and control as those in NR and NW.

NARA 1572 exempted NL from the requirement they inspect and account for a percentage of their SPRs identified as "unique record items" on an annual basis. The rationale for this decision was that (1) Presidential Libraries contain an extremely high volume of materials having a direct association with a former president (intended to convey that a disproportionately high volume of library textual records would be classified as Specially Protected Records), and (2) the materials have a limited exposure to researchers and staff compared to Washington, D.C. area holdings. The auditor was unable to compare the volume of SPRs identified at Presidential Libraries to those at regional archives or the locations in and around Washington, D.C. because most Presidential Libraries are not maintaining itemized inventory lists in accordance with NARA guidance.

The OIG believes similar controls should be exercised over SPRs throughout the agency (i.e. regardless of whether they reside in NW, NR, or NL) for two reasons:

1. The definition of what constitutes an SPR is the same throughout the agency, regardless of the office in which the textual records are located, and
2. Presidential Libraries are required to conduct annual inspections of 100% of their museum items (e.g. artifacts) identified as especially vulnerable to theft (e.g. analogous to the definition of a Specially Protected Record)

While the universe of textual records identified as especially valuable/vulnerable is ostensibly larger than the universe of museum items meeting the same criteria, we believe this may support the notion of inventorying a percent of the SPRs annually (at a rate lower than the 100% annual inventory of museum items, which are less numerous), but does not provide a rationale for completely excluding Presidential library SPRs from annual inventorying.

As a result of current conditions, SPRs are not subject to similar controls across the agency; highly valuable textual records are not subject to similar controls as highly valuable museum objects within NL, and; NL lacks a mechanism for proactively inspecting and inventorying, albeit on a sampling basis, those Presidential textual records identified as especially vulnerable to theft.

#### **Recommendation 4**

The Director Policy and Planning Staff and Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries should work together to revise NARA 1572.16 to require that NL:

- a. perform annual inspections of each specially protected area and prepare an annual written report documenting the results (to be transmitted to the Office Head), and
- b. account for a certain percent of their "unique record item" SPRs annually.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Management Response**

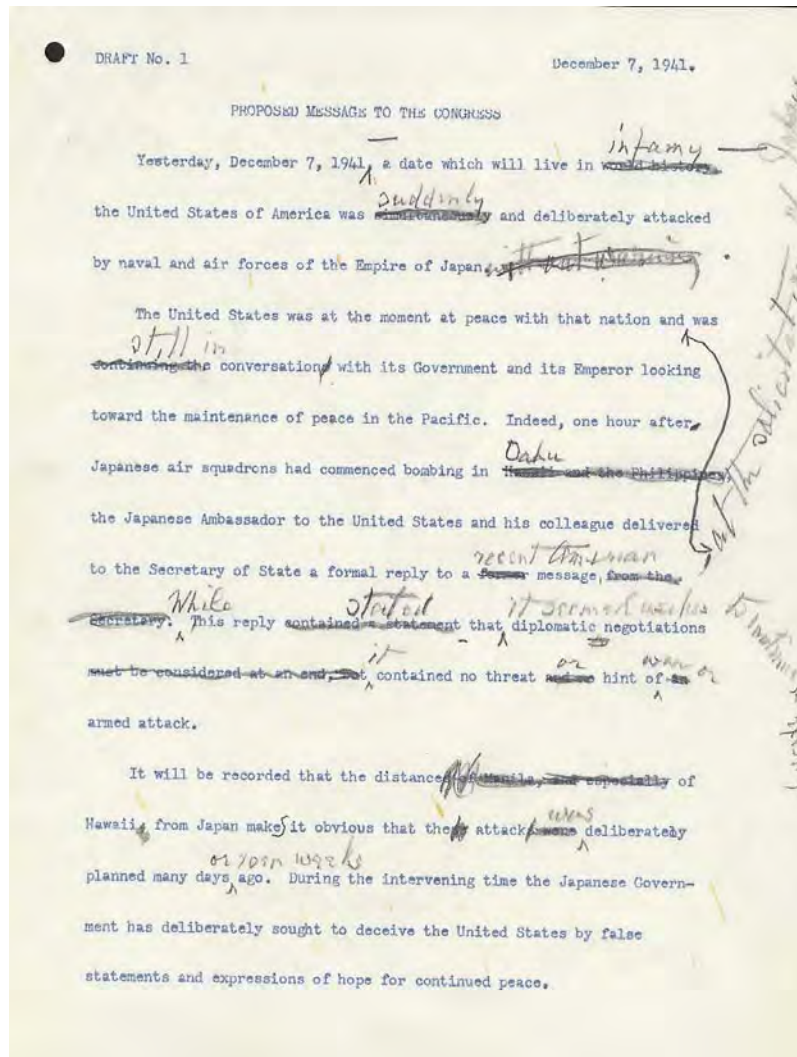
Management concurred with our recommendation. Specific action on the recommendation will be deferred until a comprehensive revision of NARA 1572 is completed.

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<sup>6</sup> In order to accomplish recommendation 4.b., recommendation 1.e. must first be resolved.

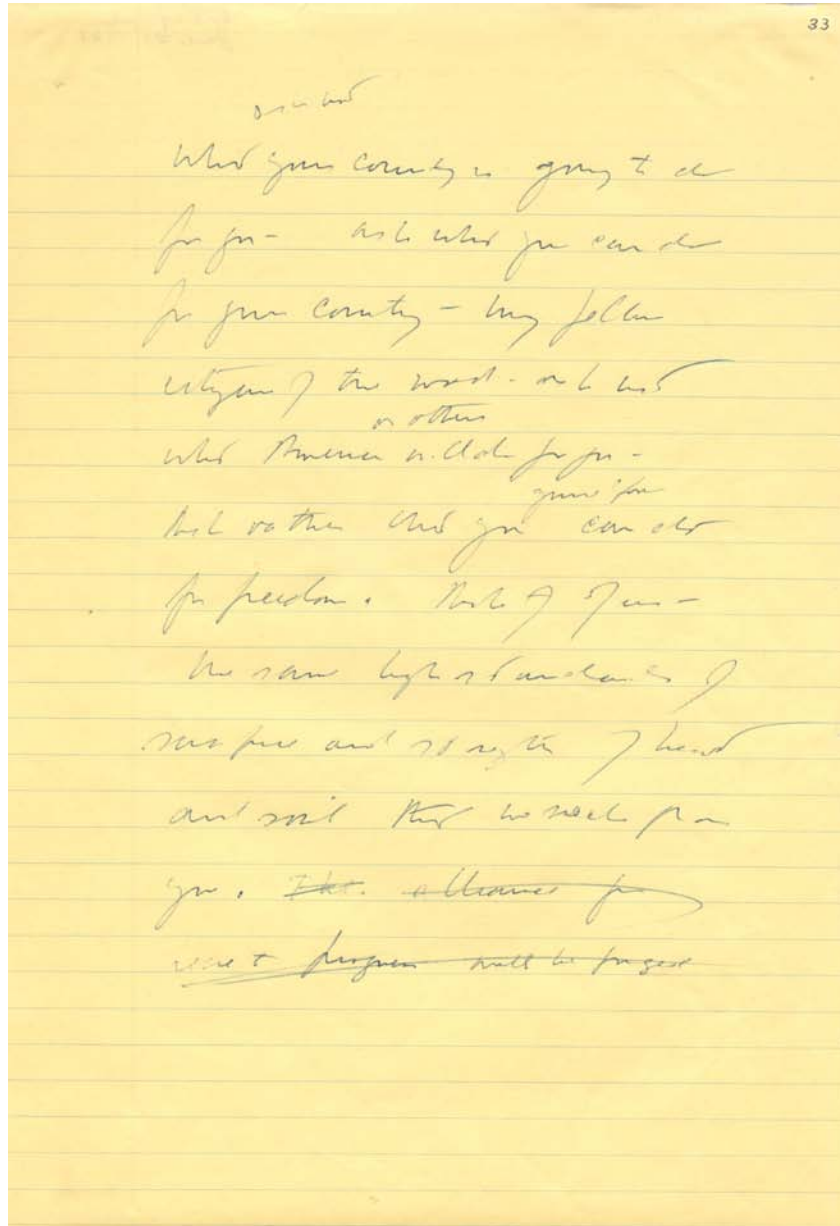


Examples of Specially Protected Records



Franklin Roosevelt’s “Day of Infamy”  
Speech (page 1 only) with handwritten annotations

Examples of Specially Protected Records



Page from President Kennedy's 1961 Inaugural Speech in which he says "Ask not what your country can do for you..."

## Examples of Specially Protected Records

- 10 -

THERE IS ONE SIGN THE SOVIETS CAN MAKE THAT  
WOULD BE UNMISTAKABLE, / THAT WOULD ADVANCE  
DRAMATICALLY THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM AND PEACE.

GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV, IF YOU  
SEEK PEACE /- IF YOU SEEK PROSPERITY FOR  
THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE /--  
IF YOU SEEK LIBERALIZATION, / COME HERE,  
TO THIS GATE.

MR. GORBACHEV, OPEN THIS GATE.

MR. GORBACHEV, TEAR DOWN THIS WALL.

I UNDERSTAND THE FEAR OF WAR AND THE  
PAIN OF DIVISION THAT AFFLICT THIS  
CONTINENT /- AND I PLEDGE TO YOU MY  
COUNTRY'S EFFORTS TO HELP OVERCOME THESE  
BURDENS. / TO BE SURE, WE IN THE WEST MUST  
RESIST SOVIET EXPANSION, / SO WE MUST  
MAINTAIN DEFENSES OF UNASSAILABLE STRENGTH.  
/ YET WE SEEK PEACE, / SO WE MUST STRIVE TO  
REDUCE ARMS ON BOTH SIDES.

Speech card used by Ronald Reagan to deliver his remarks  
at the Brandenburg Gate



# *National Archives and Records Administration*

8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

Date: January 7, 2009

To: Paul Brachfeld, Inspector General

From: Sharon Fawcett, Assistant Archivist Presidential Libraries

Subject: Comments on OIG Draft Report 09-01, Audit of the Controls over Presidential Library Textual Records

NL takes exception to a number of aspects of the draft textual audit report. The audit demonstrated that NL controls over its holdings are sound. In every instance, during site visits, the auditor was able to track and locate materials. The auditor found research room operations compliant with policy and that specially protected records (SPRs) were maintained in segregated storage areas within already secure stacks with limited access. Yet the auditor states that NARA *lacks assurance* that SPRs are cared for appropriately because some of our libraries do not maintain itemized lists of voluminous SPR holdings. NL has *reasonable assurance* that all textual holdings are maintained appropriately and securely. *Absolute assurance* is never possible.

We are pleased that the auditor discovered and noted in the draft report that controls are in place for caring for our holdings. We do not agree that the lack of an itemized list "complicates efforts to control and account for SPRs," or makes it "difficult and time consuming...to determine the universe of SPRs." Presidential libraries have long segregated materials requiring special protection, even before such a designation came into use. Libraries do maintain inventories of holdings. Parallel folders containing SPRs are easily tracked back to their original locations where copies identified as such are located. Additionally, inventories at the box and folder level do provide a universe of holdings from which to measure quantities. NARA's Presidential libraries are able to trace documents to the original locations and vice versa even without itemized lists.

We generally concur with the four recommendations in the draft report, but cannot adequately address them until a comprehensive revision of NARA 1572, *Security for NARA Holdings*, is completed. At that time, we would like to revisit these recommendations. Specifically, the argument that artifact holdings are inventoried annually at Libraries does not correlate to textual holdings. Applying the same methodology to both types of holdings results in the same mistakes NARA has made throughout its history by conflating different program specializations. What applies to one doesn't necessarily apply to the other. Itemized control is standard operating procedure in the care and safeguarding of artifacts. This is not true of textual holdings. We expect that the update of NARA 1572 noted above will result in some requirement for annual inventories of NL textual records. It is not feasible to expect that it will be at the same level as artifact holdings or the level of textual inventories done by NR or NW.



We will not submit a formal action plan for this audit, but will provide periodic updates on the status of NARA 1572 through NPOL.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Fawcett". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

SHARON FAWCETT  
Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries

cc: NPOL