

## **Bi-annual Report on Operations of the National Declassification Center**

### **Reporting period: January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010**

This is the second 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 30 June and 31 December.

The NDC was established by Executive Order 13526, “Classified National Security Information,” under the direction of the Archivist of the United States, to coordinate 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 EO 13526 specified a December 31, 2013 deadline for making available to the public the declassified records within the approximately 400 M pages currently backlogged (that is, currently accessioned but not yet fully processed for release) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and under the NDC purview.

In The Strategic Plan of the National Archives and Records Administration, 2006 – 2016, 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 will contain 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 NDC progress on the backlog and against the current year’s Civilian and Defense Annual Work Plans. These plans are Appendix B and C to the overall Prioritization Plan and may be viewed at <http://www.archives.gov/declassification/final-prioritization-plan.pdf>. Unless otherwise indicated, this month’s quantitative update reports NDC progress for the 2010 calendar year.

### **Highlights:**

- **Openness and Public Comment:**

- In November, we published the NDC Prioritization Plan and FY 2011 Work Plan that established priorities for declassification and interagency referral review. We had disseminated a draft Prioritization Plan in late May to encourage public and historical community input into establishing our declassification, referral and processing priorities, and we continue to invite public comments and suggestions by way of the [NDC Blog](#) and website: <http://archives.gov/declassification>.
- In appearances before the Public Interest Declassification Board in July and September, we provided updates to challenges and successes. Director/NDC’s comments for the July public session can be found on [NDC Blog](#).

- **Process Improvement:**

- The start-up of new NDC work processes began July 19 (these business processes were identified in the previous *Bi-annual Report on Operations of the National Declassification Center, January 1 – June 30, 2010*). At the 60-day mark, we held an all-day session to address workforce-wide concerns and solve newly identified chokepoints. Additional process improvements were implemented within 10 days of that review.
- In October, our new Metrics team began working to provide end-to-end tracking for all NDC operations, and our current numbers are a result of that developing capability. The work of this team is allowing us to pinpoint new chokepoints in our processes, report more accurate production statistics, and work toward streamlining all of our data capture efforts. The team is headed by a highly experienced data scientist with more than 13 years experience supporting declassification operations at NARA and other government agencies.

- **Review:**

- We began to coordinate two government-wide special collection reviews for the declassification and release of material associated with the Pentagon Papers (40<sup>th</sup> anniversary) and the Berlin Wall construction (50<sup>th</sup> anniversary). We hope to have both declassification efforts completed by the end of the year, with the results available to the public in a central location such as on our website.
- We prioritized certain collections within the Truman through Carter Presidential Libraries, 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.
- During the six-month reporting period (1 July – 31 December 2010), referral review was ongoing under the RAC program. The Truman through Carter Presidential Libraries have had scanned 3,353,657 pages for review under RAC. Since 1997, 1,818,980 pages have been completed for declassification review, and as of 31 December 2010, 1,434,677 pages remain. Over one million pages have been returned to the Presidential Libraries, and other pages are undergoing quality assurance reviews and library archival processing. The Johnson Library received a delivery of 25,468 pages this reporting period for an upcoming release on an unclassified system in their research room. RAC-reviewed pages are not reported as part of the Federal accessioned-records backlog in the **Status of the Workload and Production** portion below.

- During the six-month reporting period (1 July – 31 December 2010), agencies were continuing to do page-by-page equity review for their referrals in the Interagency Referral Center. 1,078,173 referred pages were completed for equity review. Of those pages, 604,709 referred pages were declassified and 473,464 referred pages were exempted. These pages are reflected in the **Status of the Workload and Production** portion below.
- **New issues and business processes under development:**
  - To provide declassified historical documents to our customers in a timelier manner, we recognized the need to track all records from accessioning to their final availability in order to facilitate referral review for declassification and release. We began working with a contractor in September to develop the requirements for an IT system that would be responsive to federal agency needs, including improved NDC processes, improved data collection, and integration.
  - We are finalizing a new process for interagency declassification review and processing of special media and electronic records, including creating a new NARA position to coordinate and facilitate special media original reviews due December 31, 2011.
  - We are also finalizing new work processes for Freedom of Information Act/Mandatory Declassification Reviews for classified Federal records to provide for more timely responses to public requests. We are currently piloting new methodologies we expect to have in full implementation in the spring.

### **Interagency Cooperation:**

- During the six-month reporting period, Agency personnel from Army, Air Force (USAF), Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Security Agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and Department of Energy (DOE) participated in daily Evaluation Team activities, frequently providing staffing for two inter-agency teams per day/four days each week. In addition, the following agencies supported Quality Assurance Team and special targeted review activities: Army, Department of State, NSA, DIA, USAF, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Justice (DOJ), CIA and DOE. DOE continued an expansion of its workforce commitment in order to assess all records in the backlog.
- Quarterly NDC Steering Group meetings have been held with office-level heads from the Intelligence, Defense, Law Enforcement, and Diplomatic Communities in order to keep them apprised of progress and issues. During this six-month reporting period, we also met with office directors and declassification managers for Army, CIA, DOJ, USAF, NSA, Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and OSD.
- The NDC Joint Referral Center, stood up in March by Department of Defense (DOD) to coordinate and facilitate the review and referral of the DOD subset to the backlog, are conducting a 100% quality

assurance review of untabbed (non-exempted or referred) DOD records and a final review of DOD referrals to DOD components. The Armed Services, OSD, JCS, DIA, NSA, Missile Defense Agency (MDA), National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and NARA are participating. During this six-month reporting period, the JRC completed 521,324 pages in 280 boxes, declassifying 441,464 pages out right. These results will be reflected in the **Status of the Workload and Production** numbers below when the records are returned to NARA for final processing.

### **Status of Workload and Production:**

As was explained above, the start-up of remaining new NDC work processes began July 19 (these business processes were identified in the previous *Bi-annual Report on Operations of the National Declassification Center, January 1 – June 30, 2010*); these underwent fine tuning where appropriate during the six-month reporting period.

With the assistance of our developing metrics capabilities (begun in October) and the full involvement of affected government agencies, our production numbers for the full 2010 calendar year below reflect the number of backlog pages evaluated in the NDC for referral quality review. A subset of these pages has been declassified (released to the open shelves). The remaining pages that have completed NDC referral quality evaluation are in the NDC final indexing queue, have been excluded for Department of Energy sensitivities, or have been exempted (that is, awaiting final equity review or future automatic declassification-mandated re-review for declassification).

Included in the pages released to the public are documents from record group (RG) 38 Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, RG 40 Department of Commerce, RG 56 Department of the Treasury, RG 59 Department of State, RG 64 National Archives and Records Administration, RG 84 Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, RG 263 Central Intelligence Agency, RG 286 Agency for International Development, RG 306 U.S. Information Agency, RG 313 Naval Operating Forces, RG 319 Army Staff, RG 330 Office of the Secretary of Defense, RG 334 Inter service Agencies, RG 340 Secretary of the Air Force, and RG 341 Headquarters, U.S. Air Force (Air Staff). Newly available records will receive enhanced descriptions from other NARA units. In future, we will provide more detailed information on our website describing the specific collections within those record groups.

Total backlog pages as of NDC stand up on January 1, 2010: 417, 916, 550 pages

Total pages evaluated in the NDC referral quality review process (January – December 2010):  
83,000,000 pages

Total pages released to the open shelves (January – December 2010): 12, 017,075 pages

Total backlog pages requiring referral quality review processing as of December 31, 2010: 334,016,550 pages.