

National Reconnaissance Office

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2003

This report contains information in the format prescribed by the EFOIA.

I. Basic Information

A. Name, Title, Address and telephone number of person(s) to contact with questions about the report:

Chief, Information Access and Release Team
14675 Lee Road
Chantilly, VA 20151-1715
(703) 227-9128
FAX (703) 227-9198

B. Electronic address for report on the World Wide Web:
<http://www.nro.gov/foia/index6.html>

C. How to obtain a copy of the report in paper form:

Written request can be submitted by mail to:

Chief, Information Access and Release Team
14675 Lee Road
Chantilly, VA 20151-1715
(703) 227-9128
FAX (703) 227-9198

II. How to Make a FOIA Request

Submit a written request to the mail address above. Transmission via facsimile also is acceptable. The facsimile number is (703) 227-9198. Although a simple letter of request is sufficient, see our FOIA web site at the electronic address at section I above, for suggestions in making your request.

A. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all individual agency components and offices that receive FOIA requests.

The mailing address in section I.A. above is the single, central office that receives all FOIA requests for the NRO.

B. Brief description of the agency's response-time ranges.

FOIA requests are routinely responded to in the allotted 20 working days. Those requests requiring more time depend on the amount of information requested, legal issues involved and the availability of records requested.

C. Brief description of why some requests are not granted.

Requests or parts of requests that are not granted largely have been denied because of compliance with the national security-related laws of the United States. In particular, the NRO, like all other U.S. intelligence agencies, has the responsibility to protect intelligence sources and methods from disclosure. This responsibility frequently prevents the release of records or parts of records. Further details are in section IV.A. below.

III. Definitions of Terms and Acronyms Used in the Report

A. Agency-specific acronyms or other terms.

None

B. Basic terms

1. FOIA/PA Request - Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act request. A FOIA request generally is a request for access to records concerning a third party, an organization, or a particular topic of interest. A Privacy Act request is a request for records concerning oneself. Such requests are also treated as FOIA requests.

2. Initial Request - a request to a federal agency for access to records under the Freedom of Information Act.

3. Appeal - a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a full denial or partial denial of access to records under the Freedom of Information Act, or any other FOIA determination such as a matter pertaining to fees.

4. Processed Request or Appeal - a request or appeal for which an agency has taken a final action on the request or the appeal in all respects.

5. Multi-track Processing - a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests in each track are processed on a first-in/first-out basis. A requester who has an urgent need for records may request expedited processing (see below).

6. Expedited Processing - an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester has shown an exceptional need or urgency for the records which warrant prioritization of his or her request over other requests that were made earlier.

7. Simple Request - a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non-expedited) track based on the volume and/or simplicity of records requested.

8. Complex Request - a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the volume and/or complexity of records requested.

9. Grant - an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.

10. Partial Grant - an agency decision to disclose a record in partial response to a FOIA request, deleting information determined to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA's exemptions; or a decision to disclose some records in their entirety, but to withhold others in whole or in part.

11. Denial - an agency decision not to release any part of a record or records in response to a FOIA request because all of the information in the requested records is determined by the agency to be exempt under one or more of the FOIA's exemptions, or for some procedural reasons (such as because no record is located in response to a FOIA request).

12. Time Limits - the time period in the Freedom of Information Act for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily 20 working days from proper receipt of a "perfected" FOIA request).

13. "Perfected" request - a FOIA request for records which adequately described the records sought, which has been received by the FOIA office of the agency or agency component in possession of the records, and for which there is no remaining question about the payment of applicable fees.

14. Exemption 3 statute - a separate federal statute prohibiting the disclosure of a certain type of information and authorizing its withholding under FOIA subsection (b)(3).

15. Median number - the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3,7 and 14, the median number is 7.

16. Average number - the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers.

IV. Exemption 3 Statutes

List of Exemption 3 Statutes relied on by agency during current fiscal year:

National Security Act of 1947, as amended, codified at 50 U.S.C. §403-3 (c)(6) and National Defense Authorization Act of 1997, codified at 10 U.S.C. §424.

Brief description of type(s) of information withheld under each statute:

The National Security Act of 1947 exempts from release certain information that, if released, reasonably could be expected to lead to the unauthorized disclosure of intelligence sources and methods that the Director of Central Intelligence is charged with protecting.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 1997 exempts from release organizational and personnel information for the National Reconnaissance Office.

V. Initial FOIA/PA Access Requests

A. Number of initial requests

1. Requests pending as of end of preceding year: 47
2. Requests received during current fiscal year: 97
3. Requests processed during current fiscal year: 97
4. Requests pending as of end of current fiscal year: 21

B. Disposition of initial requests

1. Number of total grants: 16
2. Number of partial grants: 19
3. Number of denials: 10

a. number of times each FOIA exemption used
(counting each exemption once per request):

- (1) Exemption 1: 20
 - (2) Exemption 2: 3
 - (3) Exemption 3: 17
 - (4) Exemption 4: 0
 - (5) Exemption 5: 0
 - (6) Exemption 6: 1
 - (7) Exemption 7(a): 0
 - (8) Exemption 7(b): 0
 - (9) Exemption 7(c): 0
 - (10) Exemption 7(d): 0
 - (11) Exemption 7(e): 0
 - (12) Exemption 7(f): 0
 - (13) Exemption 8: 0
 - (14) Exemption 9: 0
4. Other reasons for nondisclosure (total): 52
 - a. no records: 22

- b. referrals: 6
- c. request withdrawn: 2
- d. fee-related reason: 2
- e. records not reasonably described: 0
- f. not a proper FOIA request for some other reason: 7
- g. not an agency record: 1
- h. duplicate request: 0
- i. other: 13 Operational File Exemption

VI. Appeals of Initial Denials of FOIA/PA Requests

A. Number of appeals

- 1. Number of appeals received during fiscal year: 6
- 2. Number of appeals processed during fiscal year: 3

B. Disposition of appeals

- 1. Number completely upheld: 0
- 2. Number partially reversed: 3
- 3. Number completely reversed: 0

a. Number of times each FOIA exemption used
(counting each exemption once per appeal):

- (1) Exemption 1: 1
- (2) Exemption 2: 0
- (3) Exemption 3: 2
- (4) Exemption 4: 0
- (5) Exemption 5: 0
- (6) Exemption 6: 0
- (7) Exemption 7(a): 0
- (8) Exemption 7(b): 0
- (9) Exemption 7(c): 0
- (10) Exemption 7(d): 0

(11) Exemption 7(e): 0

(12) Exemption 7(f): 0

(13) Exemption 8: 0

(14) Exemption 9: 0

4. Other reasons for nondisclosure (total):

a. no records: 0

b. referrals: 0

c. request withdrawn: 0

d. fee-related reason: 0

e. records not reasonably described: 0

f. not a proper FOIA request for some other
reason: 0

g. not an agency record: 0

h. duplicate request: 0

i. other: 2 Operational File Exemption

VII. Compliance with Time Limits/Status of Pending Requests

A. Median processing time for requests processed during the year

1. Simple requests

a. number of requests processed: 86

b. median number of days to process: 9

2. Complex request

a. number of request processed: 11

b. median number of days to process: 92

3. Requests accorded expedited processing

a. number of requests processed: 0

b. median number of days to process: Not Applicable

B. Status of pending requests

1. Requests pending as of end of current fiscal year: 21

2. Median number of days that such requests were pending
as of that date: 238

VIII. Comparisons with Previous Year(s) (Optional)

IX. Costs/FOIA Staffing

A. Staffing levels

1. Number of full-time FOIA personnel: 5.0
2. Number of personnel with part-time FOIA duties (estimated FTE): 0
3. Total estimated number of personnel (FTE): 5.0

B. Total estimated costs (including staff and all resources)

1. FOIA processing (including appeals): 0
2. Litigation-related activities: 0
3. Total estimated costs: \$523,715

C. Statement of additional resources needed for FOIA compliance (optional)

X. Fees

Total amount of fees collected by agency for processing requests: \$215.80

XI. FOIA Regulations (Including Fee Schedule)

NRO FOIA regulations are codified at 32 CFR Part 296 and can be obtained by contacting the Information Access and Release Center (See section I.A.), by referencing the Federal Register, Vol. 32 or by accessing the Internet at <http://www.nro.gov/foia>.