UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

THIRD SESSION OF THE
DoD HISTORICAL RECORDS DECLASSIFICATION
ADVISORY PANEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Friday, August 9, 1996
0900-1400 hours
National Archives Building
Reception Room 105

CHAIRPERSON: DR. ALFRED GOLDBERG, Historian
Office of the Secretary of Defense

PANEL MEMBERS:

ERNEST MAY
MARC TRACHTENBERG
ROBERT WAMPLER
GERHARD WEINBERG
WILLIAM EPLEY
WILLIAM DUDLEY
WILLIAM HEIMDAHL
DAVID A. ARMSTRONG
FRED GRABOSKE
MERVYN LEFFLER

STAFF MEMBERS:

CYNTHIA KLOSS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The DoD Historical Records Declassification Advisory Panel opened its fourth meeting on November 15th, 1996, with a recap of the action items from the previous meeting.

Chairman Goldberg stated that as the first year of operation of the panel came to an end, the recommendations made have had a mixed fate. An effort has been made to resolve the problems, but it's a theoretical process and the panel now has pragmatic work to do; i.e., how to put recommendations into practice?

The policy letter is still going through draft and coordination and may drag on for months. Also, quality and quantity in declassifying top-level material is being stressed, and that it is difficult to turn the declassifiers around to doing it the way the panel wants, and that they don't have the resources.

Central mechanism for speeding up declassification, getting referrals handled more quickly, doesn't have much enthusiasm.

There has been some success in training, but resources are still a problem. Basic issues include allocation of resources and the priority for declassification. Declassification is going on but not
in quality or quantity.

Measurements of progress. Two pilot projects have been done. Reports are needed on progress of declassification work, and there has been progress on disposition of records, transfer to Archives, and accessibility to the records.

In the orientation briefings, the Department of State Historical Advisory Panel, represented by William Kimball, stated it is a difficult job but can be done. The State Department committee was created with nine people operating independently. It is responsible to Congress and the President for implementation of provisions of law. It has real oversight responsibility.

In the Department of Energy's briefing, Janet O'Connell said DOE has a system that's based heavily on classifier standards that are being continuously updated and also has formal training for its people.

The Openness Advisory Panel had its first meeting and is struggling with a lot of issues. There are four subgroups focusing on legal issues, Atomic Energy Act, accessibility with NARA issues, productivity and priorities. The panel also focuses on national security and nuclear-related information restricted data.
The United States Information Agency, represented by William Harwood, stated it has 5,300 boxes to review. Mr. Harwood discussed a December conference and how the operation is working.

The December conference will be for all government agencies involved in declassification. A problem has been lack of coordination on policies and technical issues.

During the Open Panel Discussion, central mechanism was again discussed for handling referrals for DoD components. Suggestion was to recommend to the Secretary of Defense to have a central referral with authority over equities of other agencies within DoD, but resources will be needed.

Discussion was then held concerning the recommendations with no clear answers.

The Open Panel Discussion continued after lunch with a discussion on accessions for OSD that have been reviewed and transferred to College Park.

The meeting was closed by Chairman Goldberg stating that interesting suggestions had been made, and they would be discussed in future meetings.

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In the Matter of: ADVISORY PANEL

were held as herein appears and that this is the original transcript thereof for the file of the Department, Commission, Administrative Law Judge or the Agency.

Signature
Official Reporter.

Dated: NOVEMBER 15, 1996

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