Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

11 April 2019

Mr. John P. Fitzpatrick
Senior Director
Records Access and Information Security Management
National Security Council
Executive Office of the President
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Mr. Fitzpatrick:

Per President Barack Obama's direction on 4 January 2017 (see attached), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) completed its search for, and review of, CIA records related to human rights abuses committed during the Argentine military dictatorship between 1975 and 1984. CIA utilized search strategies tailored to its specific missions and record-keeping systems that were determined likely to surface relevant materials in our record holdings, including searches of electronic and hard copy files in classified and unclassified systems.

CIA reviewed 918 relevant records, totaling 16,403 pages of material. During its review of these records, CIA protected information from public release in instances where the disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause damage to the national security, in accordance with Executive Order 13526, "Classified National Security Information"; where otherwise authorized by applicable law, such as intelligence sources and methods and internal CIA information, as required by section 102A(i) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, and section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, as amended; or where disclosure of the information would constitute a unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

As a result of these efforts, CIA approved for release 124 records in full and 691 records in part, and denied 103 records in their entirety. CIA is prepared to publically release those records approved for release in full and in part on 11 April 2019.

Sincerely,

Milton R. Downs

Enclosure

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY – ARGENTINA DECLASSIFICATION PROJECT NARRATIVE

This narrative provides a detailed summary of actions undertaken by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in response to a Presidential Tasking via the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (NSC) on 13 June 2016. The Presidential Task directed various Executive branch departments and agencies to search for records related to human rights abuses committed in Argentina between 1 January 1975 and 31 December 1984, and to review those records for potential declassification and public release. As described below, CIA developed for this effort a search and review strategy designed to identify, declassify, and release to the public responsive information to the greatest extent possible consistent with applicable law. Records determined to be responsive were reviewed for public access using standards established in Section 3 of Executive Order (E.O.) 13526, "Classified National Security Information," and common public release standards agreed to by all participating agencies.

Search Methodology

CIA searched for responsive records utilizing the date range and the 19-page list of search terms that the NSC provided to agencies. CIA also employed logical variants of the provided search terms to ensure that the search identified all responsive records.

CIA searched all electronic databases and paper records likely to contain responsive records. The Directorate of Operations (responsible for the clandestine collection of foreign intelligence from human sources, covert action, and paramilitary operations), the Directorate of Analysis (responsible for analyzing, interpreting, and forecasting foreign intelligence issues and world events of importance to the United States, and producing finished intelligence reports for dissemination to US Government policymakers), the Office of the Director of CIA, the Office of Congressional Affairs, Office of Public Affairs, and the Office of General Counsel were the CIA directorates and offices reasonably likely to possess records responsive to the Presidential Task.

Since CIA's records are decentralized and compartmented, records management specialists in each of these directorates and offices identified the specific databases and files that were likely to contain responsive records. Among the systems/databases searched were those that contain previously-released records, indices of archived records, and records from various CIA components and offices. In addition, CIA conducted manual searches of relevant archived paper records that were likely to contain responsive material. CIA included as responsive all records pertaining to human rights abuses in Argentina during the relevant time period. The searches erred on the side of inclusiveness and yielded 1,395 records initially determined responsive to the Presidential Tasking.

Duplicate Records and "Best Available" Copies

During both the search and review phases, CIA sought to identify all duplicate records to reduce the number of times a single record appeared within the final collection of responsive records. Duplicates were removed.

The responsive records included in the collection represent the "best available" copies. For example, due to the age of some records, the only available copies located in CIA's electronic files contain redactions made manually on the paper records prior to digitization.

Review Methodology

CIA reviewed all records located during the search phase of this project. Analysts studied each record to determine if it was responsive and not duplicated elsewhere in the collection. After review, 918 records were deemed responsive and cover a wide range of topics related to human rights abuses in Argentina during the relevant time period, including the activities of left-wing terrorists, coup attempts and political instability, and arrests of Argentine and foreign nationals by military and security forces outside the law.

CIA performed a line-by-line, word-for-word review of each responsive record to identify all information suitable for public release. In addition, CIA reviewed responsive records a minimum of six times using different reviewers of increasing seniority to ensure consistency. Thirty-five records were referred to other US Government agencies for review of their equities.

Previously-Released Information

CIA consulted various sources, including certain public websites, to confirm whether information had been previously officially released by the US Government. When CIA confirmed that CIA (or other agencies) previously released information, CIA released the same information in this collection. In addition, CIA reviewed responsive records that had been previously publicly released to determine whether additional information from those records could be released.

Information Exempted from Disclosure

CIA withheld responsive information only in the following circumstances:

(1) Where the information could reasonably be expected to cause damage to the national security, in accordance with Section 3.3 of E.O. 13526; or

(2) Where otherwise authorized by applicable law such as intelligence sources and methods and internal CIA information, as required by section 102A(i) of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, 50 U.S.C. § 3024 (i)(1), and section 6 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, as amended, 50 U.S.C. § 3507; or

(3) Where the disclosure of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, in accordance with the protections afforded to certain personal information through section 6.2(d) of E.O. 13526.

In addition, information within responsive records that was not deemed responsive to the Presidential Task was redacted as "Non-Responsive."

Conclusion

As a result of CIA's efforts, which involved approximately 40 officers and approximately 12,000 hours spent, CIA identified 918 responsive records—totaling approximately 16,403 pages of material—relating to human rights abuses in Argentina during the period specified. After the review of those records, CIA declassified and approved for public release 124 records without redactions, and 691 records with certain information withheld for the reasons set forth above (totaling 15,471 pages). CIA denied 103 records in their entirety on the basis of their continued classification and/or statutory protection.

Questions regarding CIA's search and review should be directed to the CIA Office of Public Affairs at https://www.cia.gov/index.html#.