U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Information Management Division
Winchester, VA 22602-4843

April 11, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN P. FITZPATRICK
Senior Director for Records
Access and Information Security Management
National Security Council

FROM: David M. Hardy, Section Chief
Record/Information Dissemination Section
Information Management Division

SUBJECT: The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Response to Presidential Tasking on the Argentina Declassification Project

This memorandum provides information on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) participation in response to a Presidential Tasking from the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council (NSC). The Presidential Tasking directed agencies to search for records relating to human rights abuses committed in Argentina between January 1, 1975 and December 31, 1984, and then review responsive records for public access. In response, the FBI assembled staff, including records managers, historians and declassification experts, and developed a plan to complete the task. In conducting its search, the FBI utilized search strategies tailored to its specific missions and record-keeping systems. It focused searches on those record series determined to likely contain responsive records. In evaluating responsiveness, the FBI conducted searches that erred on the side of inclusiveness, and searched both electronic and paper document files in classified and unclassified systems. Records determined to be responsive were reviewed for public access on a word-for-word basis, 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.

This project builds upon an earlier declassification project that the FBI completed in 2002 pursuant to Article 9 of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty whereby the United States Government was requested to provide records which address human rights abuses committed in Argentina during its "Dirty War." That project had both a narrower scope and a more limited timeframe. In addition to a new search, the NSC also tasked the FBI to re-review the records found during its 2002 project to see if, given the passage of time, information previously exempted from declassification could be safely released. With interagency coordination and support, the FBI determined the majority of the 1,358 pages which were redacted or denied in

full in 2002 are now releasable either in full or with other government agency redactions. Both sets of documents are scheduled to be released on November 29, 2018 and available at https://vault.fbi.gov/argentina-declassification-project.

Search Methodology

The FBI's search and review was coordinated and led by the FBI's National Security Unit and involved the participation of several different units within the Information Management Division (IMD): Initial Processing Unit; Freedom of Information Act Unit (FOIA); Classification Unit, National Security Unit; and Records Disposition Unit. The FBI used the 19-page list of search terms provided by NSC in searching for responsive records. The following data bases/data sets were used in conducting the search:

1. **The Central Records System (CRS).** The CRS is an extensive system of records consisting of applicant, investigative, intelligence, personnel, administrative, and general files compiled and maintained by the FBI in the course of fulfilling its integrated missions and functions as a law enforcement, counterterrorism, and intelligence agency, to include performance of administrative and personnel functions. The CRS spans the entire FBI organization and encompasses the records of FBI Headquarters (FBIHQ), FBI Field Offices, and FBI Legal Attaché Offices (Legats) worldwide.
2. **Automated Case Support (ACS).** ACS is an electronic, integrated case management system which became effective for FBIHQ and all FBI Field Offices and Legats on October 1, 1995. As part of the ACS implementation process, over 105 million CRS records were converted from automated systems previously utilized by the FBI into a single, consolidated case management system accessible by all FBI offices. ACS has an operational purpose and design to enable the FBI to locate, retrieve, and maintain information in its files in the performance of its myriad missions and functions.
3. **Universal Index (UNI).** UNI is the automated index of the CRS and provides all offices of the FBI a centralized, electronic means of indexing pertinent investigative information to FBI files for future retrieval via index searching. Individual names may be recorded with applicable identifying information such as date of birth, race, sex, locality, Social Security Number, address, and/or date of an event. Moreover, ACS implementation built upon and incorporated prior automated FBI indices; therefore, a search employing the UNI application of ACS encompasses data that was already indexed into the prior automated systems superseded by ACS. As such, a UNI index search in ACS is capable of locating FBI records created before its 1995 FBI-wide implementation to the present day in both paper and electronic format. Currently, UNI consists of approximately 113.6 million searchable records and is updated daily with newly indexed material.

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In full execution of the request and fulfilling our commitment to President Obama's and President Trump's declassification initiatives, the FBI presents 815 responsive documents consisting of 2,155 pages. The majority of the collection required referral to other government agencies to ascertain guidance in handling their equities. Exemptions requested by those agencies include:

- **(b)(1)** which allows withholding of information that continues to meet the standards for national security classification under E.O. 13526 ,
- **(b)(3)** which allows withholding of information "specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than Section 552b of this title) provided that such statute requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issue, or establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;"
- **(b)(6) and/or (b)(7)(c)** which allows withholding of information the release of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy; and
- **(b)(7)(d)** which allows withholding of information the release of which could reasonably be expected to disclose confidential source information to include State, local or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of a record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source.

The FBI expended numerous resources in order to search for responsive records and conduct a word-for-word public access reviews to fulfill the request. A total of 30 employees worked for approximately 850 hours for this project.

Please feel free to contact Unit Chief Joseph Bender of my staff at (540) 868-4518 if you have any questions or need further assistance regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

David M. Hardy
Section Chief
Record/Information
Dissemination Section
Information Management Division