

# The National Security Archive

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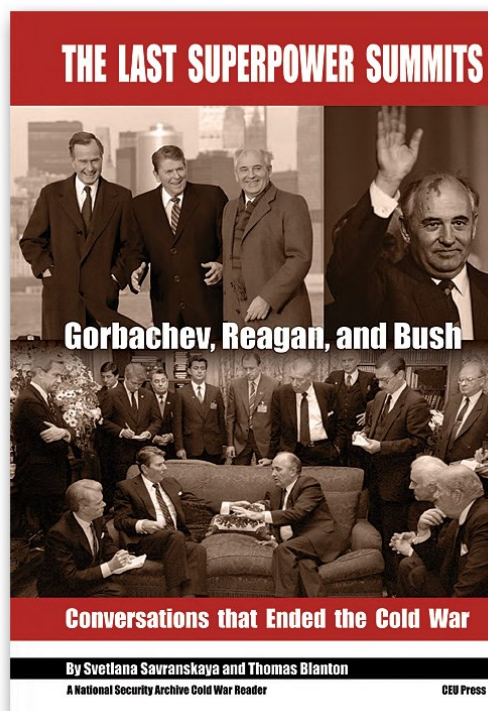
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## Annual Report for 2016

The following statistics provide a performance index of the Archive's work:

- ◆ Freedom of Information and declassification requests filed – **761**
- ◆ Freedom of Information and declassification appeals filed – **174**
- ◆ Pages of U.S. government documents released as the result of Archive requests – **42,042** including such news-making revelations as the FBI pursuit of hacking allegations in Moscow as early as 1999 (codename “Moonlight Maze”); State Department cables detailing the policy differences among “developing” nations that led to the failure of climate change negotiations in Copenhagen 2009 and success in Paris 2015; the CIA “holy grail” memo showing Chilean dictator Pinochet personally ordered the 1976 Letelier assassination in Washington, DC; the DIA report refusing to meet the December 2016 legal deadline for saving agency e-mail electronically; photographs of U.S. nuclear weapons stationed on Okinawa during the Cold War despite Japan’s constitutional taboo; President Reagan’s hand-drafted reminder against grandstanding on Soviet human rights violations since quiet diplomacy worked better; U.S. Navy documents showing unprotected sailors were ordered to hose down radioactive ships after the dirtiest-ever nuclear test at the Bikini atoll 1946; the Argentine military’s targeting of Amnesty International leaders as part of the 1970s Operation Condor murder ring; and the Bush 41 attempts to prevent, not precipitate, the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, alarmed at 3,429 nuclear weapons stationed in Soviet republics outside Russia.
- ◆ Pages of declassified documents delivered to publisher – **21,166** in two reference collections: *The Kissinger Conversations, Supplement II: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1977* (edited by William Burr); *The President’s Daily Brief: Kennedy, Johnson, and the CIA, 1961-1969* (edited by Malcolm Byrne).
- ◆ Evidence delivered to truth commissions and human rights investigators – **100** documents to the prosecution for the May 19-20, 2016 Operation Condor trial in Rome; **22** documents to the prosecution for the Guerrieri III trial on the assassination of prisoners in Rosario, Argentina; **106** documents to Professor Sergio Aguayo of the Colegio de Mexico to investigate narcotics-related murder and corruption in northern Mexico; **399** documents to Earth Rights International for the Michael Evans Declaration in the civil litigation against Chiquita International in Florida; **365** documents to the Harvard Human Rights Clinic for a case against Chiquita executives before the International Criminal Court; **30** documents to the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Chile.
- ◆ Books published by Archive staff and fellows – **3**; *The Last Superpower Summits: Gorbachev, Reagan, and Bush: Conversations that Ended the Cold War* by Svetlana Savranskaya and Thomas Blanton (Central European University Press, December 2016); *Able Archer 83: The Secret History of the NATO Exercise That Almost Triggered Nuclear War* by Nate Jones (The New Press, November 2016); *Storm Over Leyte: The Philippine Invasion and the Destruction of the Japanese Navy* by John Prados (New American Library, July 2016).
- ◆ E-Books published by Archive staff and fellows – **37**, bringing the Web site total to **576**
- ◆ Research requests to the Archive – **4,253**; Visiting researchers at the Archive’s Smith Bagley Research Center – **284**
- ◆ Archive Web site usage – Sessions: **1,682,767**; Users: **1,247,542**; Page Views: **3,161,234**
- ◆ Posts by Archive staff on *Unredacted* blog – **89**; Readers of *Unredacted* blog — **206,777** page views
- ◆ Subscribers to the Archive’s e-mail alerts – **7,979**; Followers on the Archive Twitter feed – **14,000**; Followers on the Archive Facebook page – **8,900**
- ◆ Transcripts of Archive broadcast interviews – **22**; News stories citing the Archive – **832** (from Factiva, Lexis-Nexis)

**January 2016:** On January 19 the Archive mourned the passing of Gen. William Y. Smith, one of the Archive's original board members and longest supporters. Gen. Smith helped form the original advisory board of the Archive in the 1980s, served on the audit committee of the



Archive's Board of Directors from 1999 to 2016, and played an instrumental role in multiple Archive projects, including conferences in Havana and Hanoi that dramatically re-wrote the histories of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. As a young military aide, Gen. Smith personally authored some of the key documents from inside the Kennedy and Johnson White Houses on turning points of history, and devoted extraordinary energy in his retirement to opening the documentation that would educate the public and future students of history. Gen. Smith was especially a pioneer in dialogue with former enemies, from the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam, and elsewhere, that illuminated perceptions and misperceptions on all sides. To all of us at the Archive, Bill Smith remains an American hero.



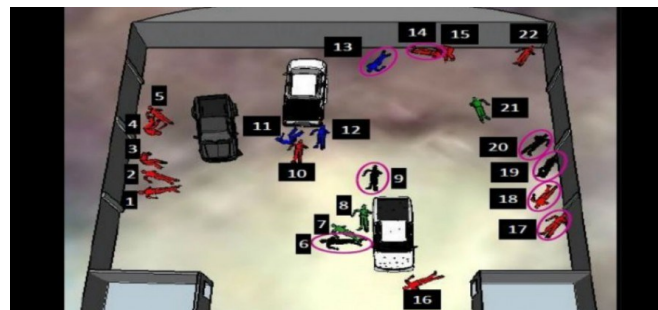
**February 2016:** On February 19 *The Nuclear Vault* showcased declassified documents and photographs obtained by Archive senior analyst Bill Burr marking the official declassification of the long-known fact that the United States stored nuclear weapons on Okinawa during the Cold War—even though U.S.



Air Force photos of nuclear weapons on the island have been publicly available but unnoticed since 1990 in Air Force collections at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Although an open secret for decades, the subject has been controversial because Japan's leaders and U.S. officials have consistently denied the presence of such weapons on Japanese territory. The Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP), a component of NARA, released the documents, including one on the U.S.-Japan negotiations on U.S. nuclear deployments in Okinawa, with previously-unpublished Air Force photographs of nuclear weapons in Okinawa. The posting prompted a flurry of Japanese press stories

including major coverage in the *Asahi Shimbun* and a widely circulated report by Kyodo News.

**March 2016:** In a March 4 joint publication with the investigative team of *Aristegui Noticias*, the Archive's Mexico Project made headlines in Mexico with a key 268-page investigative file from a case brought against Mexican Army soldiers accused of executing as many as 22 people after a June 2014 firefight in the town of Tlatlaya. The report was released after a National Security Archive access request and appeal triggered the human rights override in Mexico's transparency law. Under Mexico's access law, government agencies cannot withhold information pertaining to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Commissioners from Mexico's National Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection (INAI) ordered the release of the file over the objections of the attorney general's office, arguing, as Archive staff did in their appeal, that the Tlatlaya executions clearly constitute violations of fundamental human rights. Seen as a major victory for access to human rights information in Mexico, the report raises new questions about how Mexican authorities handled the investigation (already marred by accusations of torture and cover-up), the exact number of executions that occurred that day, and why some of the soldiers later changed their testimonies to implicate others in the crime.



On March 4, citing records from the Archive's successful Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, Colombia Project director



Michael Evans submitted a declaration in the class action lawsuit in U.S. federal court in support of claims brought against Chiquita Brands International by victims of a Colombian terrorist group funded by the multinational fruit company. The declaration named 12 individuals who played a central role in the illegal payments scheme but whose identities had been scrubbed from previous reports on the matter. The 12 named individuals are now potential witnesses for the plaintiffs.

On March 14, during the annual celebration of Sunshine Week, the Archive released its fifteenth audit testing government agency FOIA compliance as an “Email Alert” investigating the issue of email preservation—23 years after a landmark National Security Archive lawsuit established emails as government records. The 2016 Email Alert found that one sixth of all federal agencies surveyed (18 out of 113) have failed even to turn in a key report to NARA on whether or not they would meet their email records management responsibilities by a key December 31, 2016 deadline, and that agency regulations contributed to poor records management by not explicitly addressing email retention. Specifically, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission all admitted they would not meet the deadline, despite having almost four years’ notice to meet the August 24, 2012 joint directive of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and NARA to



fulfill President Obama's November 28, 2011 "Managing Government Records" memorandum. Other government entities, including the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, elected not to answer the question at all. Moreover, the National Security Archive's research into this issue actually prodded 16 agencies to complete their self-assessments. The Audit spurred press coverage on Federal News Radio and in *Federal Computer Week* and *Politico*. Archive director Tom Blanton explained, "Too many agencies somehow missed Hillary Clinton's email wake-up call . . . One sixth of agencies didn't turn in their homework this year on saving email, and three shamelessly confessed they won't meet the key deadline despite more than three years' advance notice."

On March 14-19 Archive analysts Kate Doyle and Michael Evans traveled to Colombia to provide expert guidance on opening and handling security and intelligence agency files to members of an official Colombian commission charged with making recommendations about public access to sensitive intelligence archives in anticipation of the Colombian peace settlement expected in spring 2016. Doyle and Evans delivered a comprehensive set of recommendations to the Archive's consulting partner, the Colombian Commission of Jurists, who represent civil society groups on the commission. In their recommendations, Doyle and Evans stressed the need to preserve and provide access to human rights information, emphasized the importance of following international standards and practices governing the promotion of historical memory, and recommended the creation of an independent civilian authority to oversee the review and declassification of intelligence records.

On March 18 President Obama's national security adviser Susan Rice announced a special declassification of intelligence and military documents on Argentina's Dirty War—a period in the 1970s when as many as 30,000 Argentines were killed or disappeared during a seven-year dictatorship. Archive staff assisted the Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo and the Argentine Embassy in their petition for U.S. government cooperation in requesting an expansion of an earlier 2002 declassification of State Department records on the Dirty War period to include still-secret CIA, Department of Defense and FBI records. Archive staff also advised the White House on what kinds of documents to look for and where to find them. Archive senior analysts Peter Kornbluh and Carlos Osorio were featured in interviews applauding the importance of the declassification effort on NPR and in the Associated Press, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *El País*, and the *Buenos Aires Herald*; they also wrote an Op Ed



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for *The Nation*. Kornbluh called the effort “declassification diplomacy,” saying the decision to unseal the Dirty War files “not only provides a historical atonement for early U.S. support for the coup and the repression in its aftermath, but also can provide actual evidence and answers to the families of human rights victims who continue to search for their missing loved ones in Argentina, 40 years after the coup took place.”

On March 30 the National Security Archive launched its new *Cyber Vault* web portal to acquire and publish primary documentation on all aspects of cyber policy and serve as a centralized



repository for key parts of the documentary record on this critical topic. Directed by Archive senior fellow Jeffrey T. Richelson, an international expert and widely published author on intelligence and national security issues, the *Cyber Vault* project will add to its publications on a weekly basis, with

all materials fully searchable and permanently stored on the project site. The project aims to enhance the National Security Archive’s mission to broaden public understanding of the nature, history, and conduct of U.S. foreign and national security policy and the newly salient area of cyber security. The Berlin Center for Cold War Studies hailed the launch of the *Cyber Vault* and called using Archive documentation collections a “rite of passage” for historians of the Cold War.

Also in March the Archive and its publishing partner ProQuest added *The Kissinger Conversations, Supplement II: A Verbatim Record of U.S. Diplomacy, 1969-1977* to the Digital National Security Archive series. The collection consists of more than 900 documents obtained through a 2015 Archive lawsuit that compelled the State Department and the National Archives to recover the Kissinger telephone transcripts from the former Secretary of State’s “personal” papers under seal at the Library of Congress. It updates the Archive’s body of documents focusing on Kissinger’s roles in policymaking and diplomacy under Presidents Nixon and Ford.

**April 2016:** On April 19 Archive FOIA Project director Nate Jones joined his fellow FOIA Federal Advisory Committee members in signing the final report and recommendations for the Advisory Committee’s first term (2014-2016) submitted to the Archivist of the United States. In a tangible win for FOIA requesters, the Advisory Committee voted unanimously to recommend an update of the Office of Management and Budget’s three-decades-old FOIA fee guidelines. These outdated guidelines—written before the creation of the Internet—are one of the largest sources of acrimony between federal FOIA officials and the public. The Advisory Committee

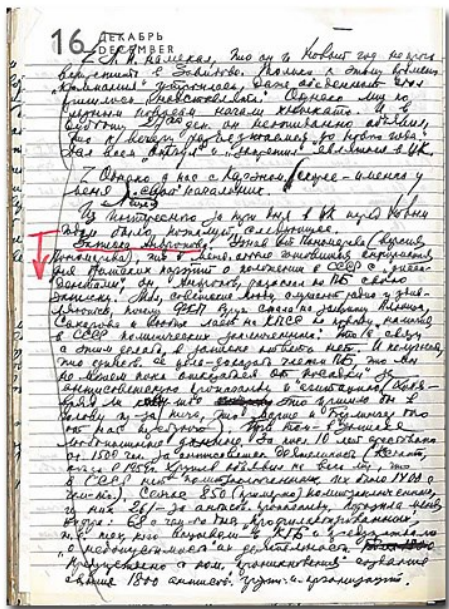


recommended that the new fee rules “embrace members of the media who publish primarily through electronic means”; clarify and limit how agencies can charge for digital reproduction (via email, CD ROM, or other means); and recognize that FOIA fees cover less than one percent of all federal costs, which suggests they are currently used not to fund FOIA, but to deter requesters. The Archivist of the United States has communicated the fee recommendation to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and the FOIA Advisory Committee will remain active in monitoring OMB’s progress in carrying out this recommendation.

On April 21 Archive senior analyst Bill Burr and Israeli nuclear history expert Avner Cohen posted an e-book addressing the subject of JFK, his administration, and the Israeli nuclear program. The documents—also published in cooperation with the Nuclear Proliferation International History Project and the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies—revealed that President John F. Kennedy worried that Israel’s nuclear program was a potentially serious proliferation risk and insisted that Israel permit periodic inspections to mitigate the

danger. Kennedy pressured the government of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to prevent a military nuclear program, particularly after stage-managed tours of the Dimona facility for U.S. government scientists in 1961 and 1962 raised suspicions within U.S. intelligence that Israel might be concealing its nuclear aims. Kennedy's objective, documents show, was to broaden and institutionalize inspections of Dimona by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The posting sparked coverage in *The Times of Israel* and *Haaretz*, and an essay in *Foreign Policy* online by editors Burr and Cohen, "How the Israelis Hoodwinked JFK on Going Nuclear."

**May 2016:** On May 19-20 Archive Southern Cone project director Carlos Osorio provided testimony and dozens of declassified documents as evidence to an Italian court in Rome investigating the deaths or disappearances of 42 dual citizens—33 Italian-Uruguayans, 5 Italian-Argentinians and 4 Italian-Chileans—under the cross-border system of repression known as Operation Condor in which South American dictatorships hunted down and assassinated thousands of dissidents in the 1970s and 1980s. The Italian magistrate Giancarlo Capaldo began investigating the deaths of the Italian citizens in 1999 and sought the assistance of Archive staff in locating and compiling documentary evidence in 2001. Osorio's 2016 testimony in Rome built on his March 2015 testimony before an Operation Condor trial in Buenos Aires and covered the breadth of Condor operations, U.S. knowledge of those operations and the authenticity of the records being introduced into evidence.



On May 25 the Archive published the 11<sup>th</sup> installment of the diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev, marking ten years of publishing this unique and valuable resource on the Archive's web site. Chief foreign policy aide to Gorbachev from 1986 to 1991 and a leading architect of *perestroika* and "new thinking," Chernyaev donated the originals of his detailed diaries to the Archive to ensure permanent public access to this record. Chernyaev started keeping a systematic diary in 1972, in which he recorded the highlights (and low points) of his work at the International Department, his attendance at Politburo meetings, participation in speech and report writing sessions at state dachas, and his philosophical reflections on daily life in the Soviet Union from the point of view of a high-level apparatchik. Each diary installment has been translated into English for the first time by the Archive's Anna Melyakova and edited by Archive Russia program director Svetlana Savranskaya. The current installment covers 1976 and provides insight into relations with fraternal Communist Parties, the XXV Congress of the

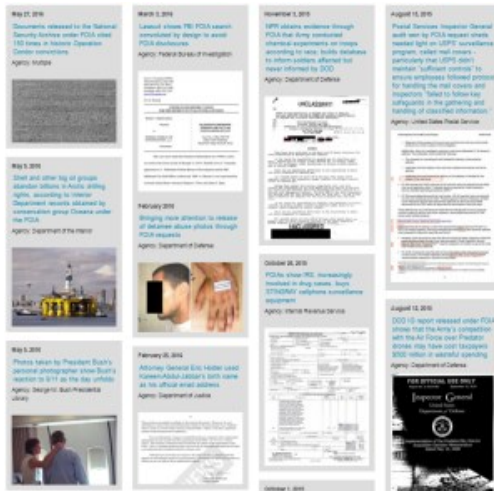
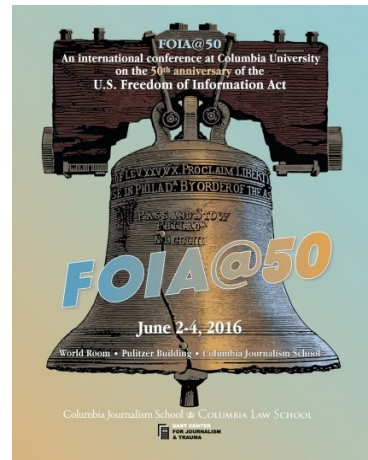
CPSU and new attention to human rights brought about by the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975. Pulitzer Prize-winner David E. Hoffman previously called the diary "one of the great internal records of the Gorbachev years, a trove of irreplaceable observations about a turning point in history."

On May 27 Archive staff testimony and submittal of documentary evidence led to guilty verdicts in the historic prosecution in a federal tribunal in Buenos Aires of eighteen Argentine military officers for participating in the coordinated, cross-border system of repression known as "Operation Condor." Carlos Osorio spent 10 hours on the witness stand in the original March 2015 trial, introducing 100 documents and an Excel data base of 900 documents drawn from U.S. government sources and the Archive of Terror in Paraguay into evidence for the court proceedings and testifying to their authenticity. Lead prosecutor Pablo Ouvina said that "In the case of the Condor proceedings it was possible to include thousands of documents from different sources as evidence. We had permanent contact with the National Security Archive." In the final arguments presented to the judges, prosecutors cited the Archive's documents some 150 times.

**June 2016:** On June 2 in the lead-up to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Freedom of Information Act in July 2016, Archive director Tom Blanton spoke at a Columbia University conference on the subject. Blanton was one of the event's three keynote speakers, along with Melanie Pustay,



Director of the Justice Department’s Office of Information Policy (OIP), and former White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Administrator Cass Sunstein. Blanton noted that as FOIA approached its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, it was in a Dickens-esque predicament of simultaneously experiencing the best of times and the worst of times. Operation Condor convictions—thanks in no small part to the 900 declassified records the Archive gave the prosecution, many of which provided critical evidence for the proceedings—are one of the many highlights of the FOIA. Lowlights include the Freedom of Information Act’s middling global ranking (a recent study by Canada’s Center for Law and Democracy ranked FOIA 45 out of 103 transparency laws, in part because the law doesn’t have a public interest harm test built in), and attacks on the statute here at home—by Cass Sunstein and others—who argue that the government is too open.



On June 13 the Archive celebrated the Freedom of Information Act’s upcoming 50th birthday by highlighting 50 of the year’s biggest news stories made possible by FOIA. The diverse and impactful stories ran the gamut from showing how FOIA releases to the National Security Archive revealed that Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush were climate change heroes who took action to protect the ozone layer, to demonstrating how state-level FOIA releases in Michigan exposed the cost-driven decisions by Flint administrators not to add corrosion controls to the water supply, causing lead poisoning in kids, and the cover-up by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The Archive posting showed the extraordinary impact

of FOIA—from human rights to government accountability and even to what you eat—and helped to pressure Congress and the White House to move the pending FOIA reform legislation. The Archive and a broad coalition of other Open Government groups mounted a wide-ranging campaign to celebrate FOIA’s fiftieth anniversary, while arguing that the law needs to be reformed by its 50th birthday, July 4, 2016.

On June 23 the Archive posted fascinating historical evidence of the high stakes around Middle East oil—British documents describing U.S. and British contingency plans to blow up oil facilities in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the 1950s in case Soviet forces threatened to overrun the area. In 1950 Harry Truman signed NSC 26/2 aimed at denying Soviet access to Middle East oil. Journalist Steve Everly, with whom Archive staff have cooperated over the years, discovered the document some years ago in the Truman Library after it had been accidentally released (the CIA demanded the archivist in question be fired). This year, Everly found more details in the British archives—showing for the first time the extent of the planning, the cooperation of American oil companies (including a predecessor of Exxon), and the direct role of the CIA. More surprising still was the fact revealed in the records that British military officials seriously contemplated deploying nuclear weapons to do the job.

On June 30 President Obama signed into law a FOIA reform bill that reflects many of the findings of the National Security Archive’s FOIA audits and litigation. Archive government-wide FOIA implementation audits conducted since 2009 showed implementation problems with agencies not updating their FOIA regulations as well as agencies ignoring the president’s “presumption of disclosure” guidance. The new FOIA bill included statutory language requiring agencies to update their regulations within 180 days and reinforced the presumption of openness. Archive lawsuits against the CIA and the State



Department exposed those agencies' practice of denying public access to historic documents (like the internal history of the Bay of Pigs disaster, and the telephone transcripts typed up by Henry Kissinger's secretaries) on the grounds that their release would "chill" the official deliberative process. The new law placed a 25-year sunset on the deliberative exemption, making it harder to withhold historical documents. Archive director Tom Blanton praised the bill as "an important improvement to the U.S. Freedom of Information Act, but there are several large leaps the U.S. law still needs to make to catch up with international freedom of information norms and standards." *The Washington Post* hailed the law as a vital tool worthy of being amended with bipartisan support and called attention to the Archive's posting on the 50 biggest FOIA impact stories.



**July 2016:** On July 1 and 22 the Archive's *Nuclear Vault* posted photographs and videos of the Operation Crossroads tests, which took place seventy years ago and were the first atomic explosions after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Operation Crossroads was a joint U.S. Army-Navy task force that attempted to measure the effects of atomic explosions on warships and other military targets by staging two atomic weapons tests at Bikini atoll in the Marshall Islands. The first test, "Able," took place on July 1, 1946, and "involved an air burst directly above the assembled ships... The bomb missed its target by several thousand feet, destroying inadvertently one of the ships carrying measuring

instruments. The error created a storm of criticism, but it was never fully explained, although the poor ballistics of 'Fat Man' were probably a factor." The second test, "Baker," took place on July 25, 1946 and was, according to Archive senior analyst Bill Burr, "the most dangerous and spectacular of the two, producing iconic images of nuclear explosions. The Baker test also brought the problem of nuclear contamination to widespread public attention, as the degree of fallout was far beyond what test planners had thought. A third test was scheduled, but canceled."

**August 2016:** On August 11 Archive staff hailed the Obama administration's "declassified diplomacy" on Argentina by posting a selection of eight key White House and State Department records from the first release of 1,078 pages of documents on Argentina during the period of its "dirty war." Among the records are memoranda of conversations between Carter and Argentine junta leader General Jorge Videla, as well as materials revealing Carter's personal intervention in obtaining the release of renowned newspaper publisher Jacobo Timerman. The documents also include new evidence about the consternation of U.S. officials at former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's efforts to challenge Carter's human rights policy which, in essence, sought to repudiate Kissinger's previous embrace of military dictatorships in Latin America and elsewhere. President Obama promised that several additional releases would be made in the coming months. Archive senior analyst Peter Kornbluh hailed the release, saying "The Obama administration has established a precedent and a pattern of using declassified diplomacy. Obama's legacy will include making the declassification of secret government records a creative component of U.S. policy to advance human rights." Archive staff analysis of the documents released sparked media attention in *The Washington Post*, *La Jornada*, the *Buenos Aires Herald*, and *The Miami Herald*.

On August 15 *The Nuclear Vault* published a recently declassified letter from a U.S. ambassador to Iceland in August 1960 showing that U.S. government officials debated whether to deploy nuclear weapons in Iceland—and whether to tell Iceland or not. The author of the recently released letter, U.S. Ambassador Tyler Thompson, argued against deployment, recognizing that Iceland's ties to NATO and the Western security system were fragile, and that if Reykjavik learned about a secret deployment, it could leave NATO. Furthermore, a "dramatic row" could "be expected to have an unfortunate effect on our friends and allies, to affect





adversely our interests as far as neutrals are concerned, and to provide a propaganda field day for our enemies.” The U.S. ultimately rejected the idea, but the revelation that internal discussions took place adds to public knowledge of the broader issue of U.S. nuclear deployments overseas (not to mention nuclear duplicity) during the Cold War. Several blogs and international media outlets covered the documents.

Also in August, the Archive received a letter from the chiefs of the Colombian government and FARC peace delegations in Havana, Cuba, asking the Archive for expert guidance on how to ensure that the historical, investigative, and judicial bodies called for in the proposed peace plan would have access to all the information they would need to reconstruct historical memory, investigate war crimes, and recover the disappeared. The Archive agreed to consult with the peace negotiators after a final peace agreement is approved as part of the "Commission of Implementation, Monitoring, and Verification of the Final Accord and the Resolution of Differences."



*The President's Daily Brief*

**September 2016:** On September 14 Archive senior analyst Bill Burr curated a “best of” briefing book from the President’s Daily Briefs (PDBs) from the Nixon and Ford administrations released by the CIA on August 24, 2016. The Nixon-Ford release and earlier PDB declassification from the Kennedy and Johnson administrations in September 2015 were the direct result of nine years of National Security Archive work, including a 2007 legal challenge—filed with Professor Larry Berman—that opened the door for the release of the PDBs. While in 2007 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the National Security Archive and Professor Berman, then a

professor of political science at the University of California at Davis, and noted—without viewing the two specific PDB documents at issue—that their disclosure could “reveal protected intelligence sources and methods,” the Court rejected the CIA’s “attempt to create a per se status exemption for PDBs.” Burr’s analysis of the release shows that President Nixon, despite the CIA’s claim that the PDBs were “the primary vehicle for summarizing the day-to-day sensitive intelligence and analysis ... for the White House,” likely did not even read them, instead relying on Henry Kissinger’s cover memos, which summarized the events and developments that he believed Nixon would want to know about, including the most recent events not covered by the briefing material. Kissinger’s cover memos are next on the Archive’s list of targets in its long-term campaign for greater openness in the intelligence community.

Also in September, Archive senior analyst Peter Kornbluh illuminated Obama’s “declassified diplomacy” by writing an opinion piece for *The Washington Post* (“Why Obama is giving old secrets to our allies,” September 18, 2016) and sparking coverage in *The Economist* (“Sunlight diplomacy,” September 24, 2016). Kornbluh argued that, “Alongside the traditional instruments of statecraft, the Obama administration has developed an entirely new tool: declassifying decades-old secrets of state to share with other governments and their societies. President Obama has used this declassification diplomacy to mend fences with other countries, advance the cause of human rights and even redress the dark history of Washington’s support for repression abroad. Allies are grateful and historians are delighted. And given the depth and range of still-secret U.S. Cold War records, declassified diplomacy has the potential to go much, much further.”



On September 23 Peter Kornbluh stood at the side of Chilean President Michelle Bachelet as she received the results of a special declassification of documents on General Augusto Pinochet’s role in the 1976 assassination of exiled critic and former foreign minister Orlando Letelier and his 25-year-old colleague Ronni Moffitt 40 years ago on the streets of Washington, D.C. The documents, including what Kornbluh called the “Holy Grail of the Letelier-Moffitt case”—a



1987 CIA special intelligence assessment that concluded the car-bombing took place on “direct order” from General Pinochet—were handed over to President Bachelet during a somber 40th anniversary commemoration at the site of the 1976 car bomb assassination at Sheridan Circle. “With this gesture of declassification diplomacy, the Obama administration has finally provided the missing link in the paper trail of evidence that leads to Pinochet’s doorstep.” The documents sparked widespread media coverage across Latin America as well as extensive coverage in *The Washington Post*.



On September 28 the Archive celebrated the 14th annual International Right to Know Day by highlighting a sampling of stories—selected from a much longer list curated by Toby McIntosh of the Archive’s sister site *freedominfo.org*—of how citizens have successfully used their right-to-information laws worldwide. Highlights included examples such as the revelation under India’s public records law that thousands had contracted HIV through hospital blood transfusions, and attention from the story forced the government to pledge to improve blood safety screenings and introduce technology to ensure zero HIV transmission. A Pakistani newspaper used Right to Know laws to show a dangerous lack of doctors in the Punjab, compelling the government to promise publicly

to fill the vacancies. The Jamaican FOI law helped citizens hold the government accountable after a building collapse.

On September 30 the Archive posted a collection of newly declassified documents—including transcripts of President George H.W. Bush’s September 27, 1991 phone call to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev giving the Soviet leader a heads-up on the imminent White House unilateral nuclear withdrawals announcement—to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Bush initiative. The announcement drew an eager response from Gorbachev to produce what experts call “the most spontaneous and dramatic reversal” ever of the nuclear arms race. Other posted documents include Gorbachev’s phone call with Bush on October 5 spelling out the dramatic Soviet nuclear pullbacks that matched and in some cases exceeded the American moves and the actual Pentagon orders to U.S. military commanders on carrying out the nuclear withdrawals, the State Department reports on follow up talks in Moscow, translations of the Soviet transcripts of those talks, and internal Soviet assessments of how much the USSR would save from cutting the nuclear weapons involved in the initiative.

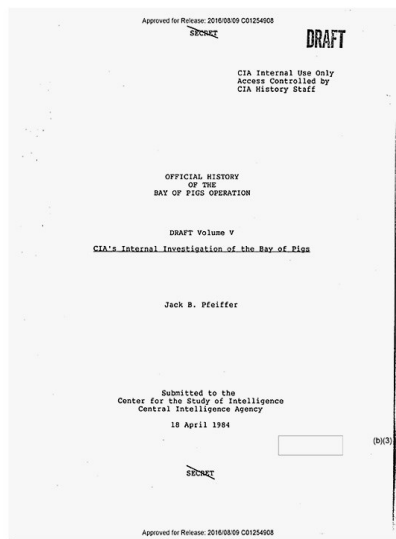
**October 2016:** Archive research director and Iran-U.S. Relations Project director Malcolm Byrne published an article in *Politico* addressing a long-simmering problem with the State Department’s *Foreign Relations of the United States* series. The official record of U.S. diplomatic relations is



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required by law to publish documentation covering world events 30 years after the fact. But a long-awaited volume covering the infamous 1953 coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq has still not appeared. The Department did publish a compilation in 1989 but it purposefully omitted any mention of CIA or British intelligence involvement in the operation, sparking a major public relations scandal that led Congress to pass stricter legislation governing the timing and content of the series. For years, State has been promising to produce a “retrospective” volume to make up for the previous omissions, but it remains off limits to the public. Byrne’s article countered several of the arguments that have been surfaced for keeping the documents locked away, the latest being a concern on the part of Secretary John Kerry himself that releasing them would give hardliners in Iran an excuse to try to torpedo the fragile nuclear deal of 2015. Every Iran expert queried by the Archive agrees that Kerry’s fears are unfounded since all Iranians are already well aware of the American role in the coup and the accord’s fate will be determined by much more substantial factors than a 60+ year-old historical episode.

On October 25, the Archive hosted a Critical Oral History workshop in London to test a set of theories about the successful conclusion of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action—the nuclear agreement between the P5+1 states and Iran. Organized by Malcolm Byrne, the meeting posed the question, how did the United States and Iran (along with the EU) manage to overcome more than three decades of bitter animosity to reach such a ground-breaking deal? The session targeted a previously untapped resource—Great Britain’s diplomatic and intelligence corps, whose collective institutional experience with Iran dates back literally centuries, and whose contributions to the agreement were critical. Former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw headed the group along with two former British ambassadors to Tehran (Sir Richard Dalton and Sir Geoffrey Adams) and former envoy to the IAEA Peter Jenkins. Byrne also separately interviewed Sir John Sawers, ex-head of MI-6 (known as “C” in the spy world), and Sir Simon Gass, the current Political Director at the Foreign Office and also a one-time ambassador to Tehran. During the course of 2016, Byrne and his partners in the Iran-U.S. relations project also interviewed several of the most senior U.S. negotiators on the Iran deal including William Burns and Wendy Sherman, along with ex-EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Baroness Catherine Ashton. The project aims to produce a monograph illuminating the road to the nuclear deal.



On October 31 the CIA released the long-contested Volume V of its official history of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion—four years after the Archive’s 2012 lawsuit seeking that still-secret volume. The 2014 ruling against the Archive held that Volume V was exempt from release under the “deliberative process privilege” of the FOIA after the CIA argued it was a draft that would “confuse the public.” In the cover letter announcing the document’s release, Chief CIA Historian David Robarge stated that the agency is “releasing this draft volume today because recent 2016 changes in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires us to release some drafts that are responsive to FOIA requests if they are more than 25 years old.” This improvement—codified by the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016—came directly from the National Security Archive’s years of litigation. The volume reveals agency infighting over the causes of the failed invasion, prompting

Archive director Tom Blanton to say “Now the public gets to decide for itself how confusing the CIA can be. How many thousands of taxpayer dollars were wasted trying to hide a CIA historian's opinion that the Bay of Pigs aftermath degenerated into a nasty internal power struggle?”

**November 2016:** On November 4 the Archive and its publishing partner ProQuest published a new compilation of documents—the 48<sup>th</sup> documentary collection in the *Digital National Security Archive* series—on the President’s Daily Briefs (PDBs) from the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. This collection of PDBs (Top Secret CIA digests of essential intelligence presented every morning to the president that were previously said to be too sensitive ever to be released) serves as a rich source not only on a pivotal period in modern world history but on the workings of government and the national security system, especially presidential decision-making, CIA intelligence collection, and government secrecy. *The President’s Daily Brief: Kennedy, Johnson, and the CIA, 1961-1969* consists of 2,483 documents and 19,098 pages of Top Secret intelligence summaries prepared by the CIA and delivered to the president each day. Among the important topics covered by these documents are: the evolution of the Vietnam war; the Cuban missile crisis; the Congo crisis; leadership changes in the Soviet Union; Soviet military aid to Cuba, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa; and elections, coups, and civil unrest in Latin America.

**December 2016:** On December 2 a federal judge in Florida ruled that “victims of Colombian paramilitary death squads funded by Chiquita” have a right to have their case heard in the United States rather than Colombia, “clearing the way for the historic case to advance toward trial.” The ruling comes nearly a decade after Chiquita pled guilty in 2007 to charges of “engaging in unauthorized transactions” with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), which was



designated a global terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department in 2001. Archive Colombia project director Michael Evans—who had filed a Declaration in the class action lawsuit earlier in the year in support of the victims—called the ruling “an important win for the victims of violent groups funded by Chiquita and a big boost for groups seeking to hold multinational corporations accountable for human rights crimes in U.S. courts.”

On December 6 Archive FOIA Project director Nate Jones posted a selection of documents on the Archive web site in conjunction with the publication of his book *Able Archer 83: The Secret History of the NATO Exercise That Almost Triggered Nuclear War*. Jones spent well over a decade fighting for the release of records on this dangerous and little-known nuclear exercise that simulated nuclear launch procedures so realistically that it triggered a Warsaw Pact response “unparalleled in scale” and risked actual nuclear war, in the words of a recently declassified all-source intelligence review included in the book. Jones participated in a month-long rollout of the book that included presentations at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, the International Spy Museum, and the NATO Archives Committee annual session in Brussels, Belgium.



On December 7 the U.S. House of Representatives Oversight and Government Reform Committee invited Archive director Tom Blanton to testify about the problem of over-classification and excessive secrecy. Blanton testified that the problem is “an arbitrary and capricious classification system that lacks internal and external credibility and contains too many secrets. This system shields government misconduct, obstructs Congressional and public oversight, retards scientific progress, and cedes enormous power to its enforcers, the securocrats. It’s time to write a law that reduces government secrecy.”



On December 8 the Public Interest Declassification Board invited Archive FOIA Project director Nate Jones to address how best to reduce over-classification, improve declassification, and ensure “a credible and transparent security classification system.” Echoing some of Tom Blanton’s House testimony, Jones urged the Board to further improve the efficiency of the National Declassification Center and expand its authority; fully realize the Moynihan Commission’s finding that “the cost of protection, vulnerability, threat, risk, value of the information, and public benefit from release” must be considered when deciding whether to classify or declassify any document; and “get into the declassification business.” Jones was joined by the Federation of American Scientists’ Steve Aftergood, the Brennan Center’s Liza Goitein, and Patrice McDermott of *OpenTheGovernment.org*.

Also on December 8 Archive senior analyst Bill Burr—in a joint publication with the Nuclear Proliferation International History Project—posted newly declassified documents adding to the debate over a September 1979 mystery flash in the far South Atlantic detected by a U.S. Vela satellite. While U.S. intelligence concluded that the flash had the characteristics of a nuclear detonation, a report for the White House by high-level scientists cast doubt on that conclusion without settling the debate. The newly posted documents—from the archival files of former ACDA Director Gerard C. Smith—illuminated Washington’s initial reactions to the Vela findings and the subsequent controversy, but also without definitively settling matters. The documents generated stories in the Israeli press—*The Jerusalem Post*, *YNet News*, and a thoughtful commentary on the blog of the Middle East Institute—because one of the theories was that Israel may have staged a nuclear test with South African assistance. Burr and Israeli nuclear history expert Avner Cohen reviewed the issues in an article in *Politico*, “What the US Government Really Thought of Israel’s Apparent 1979 Nuclear Test.”

On December 12 the Archive—along with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Nuclear Threat Initiative—hosted a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion of dozens of Nunn-Lugar veterans including Russians, Kazakhs, and Americans—including Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar—in the historic Kennedy Caucus Room of the U.S. Senate. The reunion event featured panel discussions on the future of mutual security and U.S.-Russian relations. Archive staff presented a commemorative booklet to reunion participants featuring biographies of the Nunn-Lugar veterans as well as photos and descriptions of previous landmark “critical oral history” conferences convened by the Archive to build a systematic forward-looking review of the Nunn-Lugar experience in order to draw lessons and models for U.S.-Russian cooperation and future nuclear security efforts. C-SPAN3’s *American History TV* filmed the proceedings, and the BBC also covered the anniversary. The Archive also posted newly declassified documents released to coincide with the 25th anniversary of the Nunn-Lugar Act—revealing that the risk of nuclear proliferation at the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 was even greater than publicly known at the time, with 3,429 Soviet strategic warheads scattered outside of Russia in various former Soviet republics. The Nunn-Lugar legislation began a flow of U.S. funding that helped secure post-Soviet nuclear weapons as well as reduce chemical and biological dangers, with the hands-on cooperation of Russian, Kazakh, and American military personnel and scientists—and was a testament to the value of cooperative security.



On December 22 Archive senior analyst Bill Burr published formerly Top Secret documents on the briefing that President Reagan received in February 1982 on nuclear war plans and two ensuing high-level exercises, IVY LEAGUE and NINE LIVES. Drawn from recently declassified documents at the National Archives, the core of the posting was a uniquely detailed outline of the so-called Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) briefing, including a chronology of previous tutorials for the president on the “Football” (the suitcase that included information on the war plans) and related nuclear command and control issues. The posting was the subject of a *Washington Monthly* story that highlighted one point: how far it was into his presidency that Reagan received a full briefing on the war plans, including options in the event of a Soviet surprise attack on the United States.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED  
PER E.O. 12958,  
AS AMENDED  
2004-1975-1-PR  
7/23/08

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the Soviet Union

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Mikhail Gorbachev, President  
Interpreter: Dmitri Sarachuk  
Note-taker: Nicholas Burns, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: December 25, 1991, 10:03 - 10:25 a.m.  
Camp David

The President: Hello, Mikhail. (U)

President Gorbachev: George, my dear friend. It is good to hear your voice. (U)

The President: I greet you on this momentous day, this historic day. I appreciate your calling me. (U)

President Gorbachev: Let me begin by saying something pleasant to you: Merry Christmas to you, Barbara and your family. I had been thinking about when to make my statement, Tuesday or today. I finally decided to do it today, at the end of the day. So let me say first Merry Christmas and very best wishes. (U)

Well, let me say that in about two hours I will speak on Moscow TV and will make a short statement about my decision. I have sent a letter to you, George. I hope you will receive it shortly. I said in the letter a most important thing. And I would like to reaffirm to you that I attach value what we did working together with you, first as Vice President and then as President of the United States. I hope that all leaders of the Commonwealth and above all, Russia understand what kind of assets we have accrued between the leaders of our two countries. I hope they understand their responsibility to preserve and expand this important source of capital. (U)

The debate in our union on what kind of state to create took a different track from what I thought right. But let me say that I will use my political authority and role to make sure that this new Commonwealth will be effective. I am pleased that already at Alma-Ata the leaders of the Commonwealth worked out important nuclear and strategic agreements. I hope that in Moskov they will

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On December 24 the Archive’s Svetlana Savranskaya and Tom Blanton penned an Op-Ed for *The New York Times* commemorating Gorbachev’s last phone call with President George H. W. Bush, on December 25, 1991. On Christmas Day 25 years ago, the last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, stepped down and the hammer-and-sickle flags over the Kremlin were replaced with the red-white-and-blue of the Russian Federation. Triumphalists and conspiracy theorists ever since have attributed this monumental event to U.S. policy makers. But close review of the now-declassified documents of all the conversations between American and Soviet leaders published for the first time in the new book, *The Last Superpower Summits* (CEU Press), shows that keeping the Union together, and backing Gorbachev personally, remained at the core of U.S. policy all the way through 1991, for fear of a

bloody disintegration that would dwarf the slaughter taking place at that time in Yugoslavia. “Yugoslavia with nuclear weapons,” as one official put it. In the phone conversation, Gorbachev expressed appreciation for all they had done together and his hope for a future partnership in some new form. The U.S. president felt that he was “caught up in history” at some “enormous turning point.” Gorbachev said a simple “goodbye” and shook Bush’s hands virtually; Bush responded, “goodbye.”