NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVE

Celebrating 40 YEARS

of Freedom of Information Action

1985 - 2025

December 10, 2025

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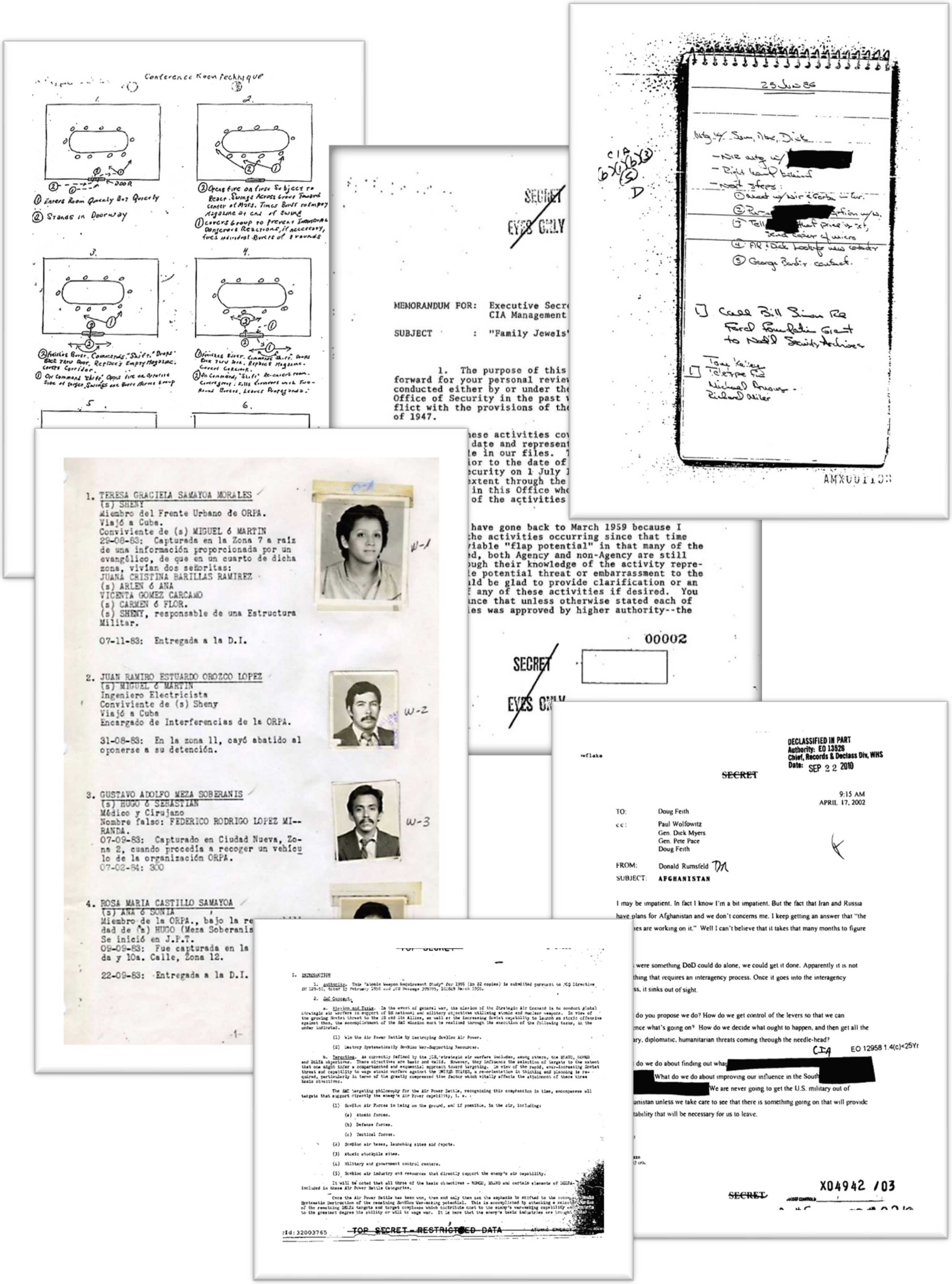
Conference Room Technique
① Enters Room Quickly But Quietly
② Stands in Doorway
SECRET
EYES ONLY
MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Secre
CIA Management
SUBJECT : "Family Jewels"
1. The purpose of this
forward for your personal review
conducted either by or under the
Office of Security in the past
flict with the provisions of the
of 1947.
have gone back to March 1959 because I
the activities occurring since that time
viable "flap potential" in that many of the
ed, both Agency and non-Agency are still
ough their knowledge of the activity repre-
potential threat or embarrassment to the
ld be glad to provide clarification or an
any of these activities if desired. You
nce that unless otherwise stated each of
es was approved by higher authority--the
00002
SECRET
EYES ONLY
25 JUN 86
CIA
(b)(1)(b)(3)
(S)
D
[redacted]
Call Bill Simon Re
Ford Foundation Grant
to Nat'l Security Archives
AMX00110
1. TERESA GRACIELA SAMAYOA MORALES
(s) SHENY
Miembro del Frente Urbano de ORPA.
Viajó a Cuba.
Conviviente de (s) MIGUEL ó MARTIN
29-08-83: Capturada en la Zona 7 a raíz
de una información proporcionada por un
evangélico, de que en un cuarto de dicha
zona, vivían dos señoritas:
JUANA CRISTINA BARILLAS RAMIREZ
(s) ARLEN ó ANA
VICENTA GOMEZ CARCAMO
(s) CARMEN ó FLOR.
(s) SHENY, responsable de una Estructura
Militar.
07-11-83: Entregada a la D.I.
2. JUAN RAMIRO ESTUARDO OROZCO LOPEZ
(s) MIGUEL ó MARTIN
Ingeniero Electricista
Conviviente de (s) Sheny
Viajó a Cuba
Encargado de Interferencias de la ORPA.
31-08-83: En la zona 11, cayó abatido al
oponerse a su detención.
3. GUSTAVO ADOLFO MEZA SOBERANIS
(s) HUGO ó SEBASTIAN
Médico y Cirujano
Nombre falso: FEDERICO RODRIGO LOPEZ MI--
RANDA.
07-09-83: Capturado en Ciudad Nueva, Zo-
na 2, cuando procedía a recoger un vehícu
lo de la organización ORPA.
07-02-84: 300
4. ROSA MARIA CASTILLO SAMAYOA
(s) ANA ó SONIA
Miembro de la ORPA., bajo la re
dad de (s) HUGO (Meza Soberanis
Se inició en J.P.T.
09-09-83: Fue capturada en la
da y 10a. Calle, Zona 12.
22-09-83: Entregada a la D.I.
DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: SEP 22 2010
SECRET
9:15 AM
APRIL 17, 2002
TO: Doug Feith
cc: Paul Wolfowitz
Gen. Dick Myers
Gen. Pete Pace
Doug Feith
FROM: Donald Rumsfeld
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN
I may be impatient. In fact I know I'm a bit impatient. But the fact that Iran and Russia
have plans for Afghanistan and we don't concerns me. I keep getting an answer that "the
were something DoD could do alone, we could get it done. Apparently it is not
thing that requires an interagency process. Once it goes into the interagency
do you propose we do? How do we get control of the levers so that we can
CIA
EO 12958 1.4(c)<25Yr
do we do about finding out wha [redacted]
What do we do about improving our influence in the South [redacted]
We are never going to get the U.S. military out of
anistan unless we take care to see that there is something going on that will provide
tability that will be necessary for us to leave.
SECRET
X04942 /03
TOP SECRET - RESTRICTED DATA
(1) Win the Air Power Battle by Destroying Sovbloc Air Power.
(2) Destroy Systematically Sovbloc War-Supporting Resources.
(a) Atomic forces.
(b) Defense forces.
(c) Tactical forces.
(2) Sovbloc air bases, launching sites and depots.
(3) Atomic stockpile sites.
(4) Military and government control centers.

The National Security Archive 1985

FOUNDERS

Scott Armstrong, formerly of the *Washington Post*, who had the vision for what the National Security Archive could become, served as its founding director, and put the organization on the map.

Raymond Bonner of the *New York Times*, who shared his declassified documents on death squads in El Salvador with Congress and other reporters and researchers in 1983-1984, sparking the original Archive collection.

Congressman Jim Moody (D-WI), who was inspired by Bonner, outraged by human rights abuses in Central America, and started the Central America Papers Project in 1984 to make the historical record available to the public.

Ruth Chojnacki, who worked for Representative Moody and became the first director of the Central America Papers Project.

Morton H. Halperin, who provided space for the papers at the ACLU Washington Office in 1984, then sponsored the National Security Archive in 1985 as part of the Fund for Peace and the Center for National Security Studies.

Stephen R. Paschke, who set up the Archive's financial records at its beginning in 1985 as the chief financial officer of the Fund for Peace, and continues to serve today as the Archive's vice president for finance.

Members of the SI/TK-BYEMAN discussion group in the early 1980s, including **Jeffrey T. Richelson**, **John Prados**, and **Stan Norris**, as well as **Bonner** and **Armstrong**, who shared documents and declassification requests and helped plant the idea for the Archive.

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The National Security Archive 2025

The Boston Globe

The heroic excavators of government secrets

For 40 years, document nerds at the National Security Archive have been discovering things our leaders would rather you didn't know. Today their job may be harder than ever.

Illustration by Luis Rendon, Boston Globe

By Stephen Kinzer

Published Dec. 1, 2025

It's a secret, don't tell anyone! That is the instinctive attitude of political leaders and bureaucrats in every government. They work assiduously to keep the public from learning what they are doing — and even what others did years ago.

Breaching this wall of secrecy is a daunting challenge. In Washington, the charge is led by a remarkable squad of archivists and historians at the National Security Archive, a nongovernmental organization that celebrates its 40th anniversary this month. Its seventh-floor suite of offices in Washington has become ground zero for the war against government secrecy.

That war is intensifying. President Trump casts himself as a champion of openness, citing his release of records connected to the assassination of President Kennedy, the death of Amelia Earhardt, and the friends of Jeffrey Epstein. He has indeed been willing to release more "deep state" material about the history of the CIA than his predecessors. He has also, however, been eager to limit public access to information he considers inconvenient. His administration has scrubbed official websites clean of data about issues from health care to climate change. Information that used to be routinely released, like the number of civilians killed in American drone strikes abroad, has been declared secret.

The 20 full-time document nerds at the National Security Archive work amid boxes and file cabinets in space provided by George Washington University. Their salaries are paid from an annual budget of slightly under $3 million, contributed by private donors and sympathetic foundations.

These specialized detectives pore over historical accounts to learn about memoranda, audio tapes, diplomatic cables, memcons (memos of conversations), and telcons (transcripts of telephone calls) that might be lurking in government files. Then they work to pry them loose via the 1967 Freedom of Information Act.

The Archive submits about 1,500 formal requests for classified documents each year, addressed to almost every government agency. The daily mail once brought boxes full of documents; now they come on discs or as PDF links. “Every day is like digital Christmas,” says the Archive’s director, Tom Blanton.

Trump, however, is something of a Grinch. At several federal agencies, budget cuts have led to the dismissal of staff assigned to review Freedom of Information Act requests. That, Blanton says, is already slowing the process of liberating documents.

The most striking of the declassified material that the Archive receives is assembled, with commentary, into highly revealing “electronic briefing books.”

In its 40-year history, the Archive has produced more than 800 of these. Titles include “Che Guevara and the CIA in the Mountains of Bolivia,” “Earliest Known Afghanistan Strategy Paper,” “Ronald Reagan: Climate Hero,” and “Mexico Faces the Legacy of Its Dirty War.”

These briefing books are a veritable Alladin’s cave of revelations. Here is the role that Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy played in promoting the 1964 military coup that ended democracy in Brazil (“This is something that’s very serious with us, we’re not fooling around about it”). Here are handwritten notes taken by CIA director Richard Helms when President Nixon ordered him to overthrow the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende, on Sept. 15, 1970 (“Not concerned risks involved—No involvement of embassy—$10,000,000 available, more if necessary—full-time job—Best men we have. Make the economy scream”). Here is what Secretary of State James Baker promised the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev during talks in 1990 (“Not an inch of NATO’s present military jurisdiction will spread in an eastern direction”). Here is a 1983 National Intelligence Estimate warning that America’s “war on drugs” in Colombia would require harsh repression (“a bloody, expensive, and prolonged coercive effort”).

Although most of the long-secret material the Archive obtains and publishes is American, it also pulls back curtains that cover dark deeds committed by other countries. It released a chilling “death squad dossier” cataloguing kidnappings and murders committed by the Guatemalan police in the 1980s, complete with photos of the victims and police notations on how each one was killed.

The Archive's document hunters have provided evidence to postconflict "truth commissions" in several countries and have helped write freedom-of-information laws in several others. A new Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Chile that tells the story of the American-backed coup there in 1973 features a trove of documents provided by the Archive. One is a classic memo in which Henry Kissinger tells Nixon why a coup is necessary: "The example of a successful elected Marxist government in Chile would surely have an impact because its 'model' effect can be insidious."

Not all documents the Archive publishes deal with earth-shattering events. It won declassification of notes taken during Elvis Presley's visit to the White House in 1970. They show that Presley badmouthed the Beatles, whose music he said "promoted an anti-American theme." President Nixon "nodded in agreement and expressed some surprise."

Documents the National Security Archive has obtained have even become political art. In 2004 the artist Jenny Holzer turned vivid excerpts from damning documents the Archive uncovered into a monumental light show that illuminated buildings in European and Latin American cities. Many dealt with the global arms trade and the War on Terror. One was from a 2002 opinion by a White House lawyer justifying harsh interrogation at secret CIA prisons ("None of these methods individually or simultaneously would be considered torture according to law").

Politicians and bureaucrats reflexively keep secrets. Yet in a democratic society, citizens want to know what their leaders have done and are doing. It is an eternal conflict. That has led the National Security Archive to adopt an unofficial motto: "Documents or Death!" It will need that resolve as it faces the Trump administration's spreading culture of secrecy.

Stephen Kinzer is a senior fellow at the Watson School of International and Public Affairs at Brown University.

The People Who Made the National Security Archive

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Smakhtina, Nadezhda
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Smith, Gerald
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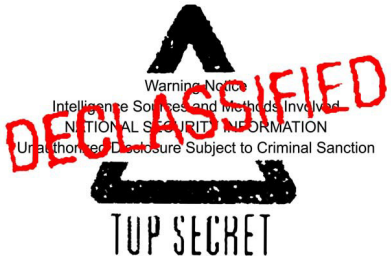

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