The National Security Archive in 2019

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

- Freedom of Information and declassification requests filed – 1,760
- Freedom of Information and declassification appeals filed – 137
- Pages of U.S. government documents released as the result of Archive requests – 124,557 including headline-making documents underpinning the new Washington Post conclusion (12.9.19) “U.S. officials misled the public about the war in Afghanistan”; tens of thousands of pages of U.S. intelligence and defense records detailing the Argentina “dirty war” from 1976 to 1983; multiple releases on U.S.-Iran relations from the 1979 hostage crisis to the now-suspended nuclear deal of 2015; a State Department “dissent channel” cable proposing the ouster of Chile’s dictator Pinochet for his role in ordering the assassination of Orlando Letelier in 1976; a CIA “black site” cable authorized by now CIA director Gina Haspel that undercut prosecutors’ secrecy claims in a current Guantanamo trial; arms control records tracking nuclear weapons developments from the first Soviet test in 1949 to the expiration of the INF Treaty in 2019; records from the first “joint task force” on cybersecurity 20 years ago and from US Cyber Command targeting practices today; previously classified insider critiques of the “launch on warning” nuclear strategy and a step-by-step guide on how nuclear war would be fought.
- E-Books published by Archive staff and fellows – 36, bringing the Web site total to 691
- Archive e-books republished by H-Diplo, the 5,500-member global network of diplomatic historians: 16
- Archive primary sources selected by Foreign Policy.com as Document of the Week: 4
- Research requests to the Archive – 3,800; Visiting researchers at the Archive’s Smith Bagley Research Center – 262
- Archive Web site usage – Sessions: 1,255,041; Users: 914,680; Page Views: 2,311,913
- Posts by Archive staff on Unredacted blog – 44; Readers of Unredacted blog — 136,088 page views
- Subscribers to the Archive’s e-mail alerts – 13,200; Followers on the Archive Twitter feed – 18,200; Followers on the Archive Facebook page – 10,739
- Awards: Choice Magazine’s “Outstanding Academic Title 2018” (Digital National Security Archive)
Briefing Books 2019

**Documenting Iran-U.S. Relations, 1978-2015**
Every U.S. President Tried – at Some Point and for Different Reasons – to Engage with Iran
New Digital National Security Archive Collection of 14,000 pages Covers the 1978-79 Revolution to the 2015 Nuclear Deal (JCPOA)
Dec 19, 2019 | Briefing Book 692

**Nuclear Weapons and Ukraine**
American, Ukrainian, and Russian Cooperation Eliminated World’s Third Largest Nuclear Force in 1990s
Declassified Documents Illuminate Nonproliferation Success Story Now Disseminated in All Three Countries
Dec 5, 2019 | Briefing Book 691

**The First Nukes on the Korean Peninsula**
John Foster Dulles Worried “These Great Monsters” Would be “Disastrous” for U.S. Political Position
Defense Department and Budget Bureau Pointed to “Economies” from Deployments – More Bang for the Buck
Nov 20, 2019 | Briefing Book 690

**1979 Iran Hostage Crisis Recalled**
Tehran Embassy Takeover Launched 444-Day Saga with Long-Lasting Implications for Iran, United States, and Global Politics
Documents Show Brzezinski Proposed Considering Replacement of Khomeini or Even Direct Intervention, but Carter Declined
Nov 4, 2019 | Briefing Book 689

**Nuclear Weapons and Turkey Since 1959**
Members of Congress Worried in 1960 That Leaders of a Coup “Might Seize Control” of Weapons
Other U.S. Officials Feared Risks of Accidental War or Overreaction to Local Crises
During Mid-1960s Turkish Officials Were Interested in Producing an “Atomic Bomb”
Oct 30, 2019 | Briefing Book 688

**Kennedy and Cuba: Operation Mongoose**
Exhibits from CIA Document Set III: A Digital National Security Archive collection published through ProQuest
Oct 3, 2019 | Briefing Book 687

**The Vela Flash: Forty Years Ago**
Controversy Hovers over Possible Nuclear Signal Detected in South Atlantic in 1979; Israeli or South African Origin Suspected by Some Experts – and President Carter
CIA Saw “Probability of a Nuclear Test as 90% Plus,” According to Newly Posted Document
Sep 22, 2019 | Briefing Book 686
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<td>‘Dissent Channel’ Memorandum Called for U.S. Policy to Force Pinochet From Power</td>
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<td>Detection of the First Soviet Nuclear Test, September 1949</td>
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<td>Newly Declassified Documents Trace Beginnings of Superpower Nuclear Arms Race</td>
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<td>Records Expand Knowledge of the Role of German Scientists in Advancing the Soviet Nuclear Program</td>
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<td>Targeting in Cyber Operations: FOIA release discusses considerations of US military targeting doctrine</td>
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<td>U.S. sought to preserve close ties to Indonesian military as it terrorized East Timor in runup to 1999 independence referendum</td>
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<td>U.S. knew of Indonesian military’s creation, direction, and arming of militias in East Timor in 1998-1999, plans to “kill, drive out, or intimidate into silence independence activists” prior to historic vote</td>
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<td>Posting of recently declassified documents marks 20th anniversary of key referendum</td>
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<td>Declassified documents detail highest-level reactions, cover-ups, critiques</td>
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<td>Sources include Politburo notes, diaries, protocols never before translated into English</td>
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<td>New Kissinger Telcons Shed Light on U.S. Policy during the War as Well as Nixon’s Nomination of Gerald Ford for Vice President</td>
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<td>Nixon Described Ford to HAK as a “Bright Truman”</td>
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<td>&quot;Atoms for Peace&quot; Was Actually a “Threat to Peace” – AEC Official in 1955</td>
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The U.S.-Japan Military Alliance: A Documents Primer
Declassified U.S. Record Describes Benefits from Mutual Security Treaty in Effect since 1960
Previous Debates over Balance of Contributions Also Discussed
Jun 28, 2019 | Briefing Book 676

China’s Tibet Problem: The Contentious History
Documents show splits within both China and Tibetan exile community, turning point in Carter years
China “mismanaged” Tibet from Dala Lama’s exile in 1959 to U.S. normalization in 1979, bringing “disaster” to most Tibetans
Jun 27, 2019 | Briefing Book 675

The “Launch on Warning” Nuclear Strategy and Its Insider Critics
Policy Adopted in 1970s, Still in Effect Today Despite Danger of False Alerts
Top Defense Official in 1978 Called It “Dangerous, Wrong, and Ineffective”
Jun 11, 2019 | Briefing Book 674

Buenos Aires Police Chief told CIA “he wanted no prisoners for interrogation, only cadavers”
Junta leader General Rafael Videla sought to hide mass murder to protect Argentina’s image
Before coup, CIA analysts predicted rise of “hardline mentality...to dominate the Army”
U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Patricia Derian reported that “Argentina has the worst human rights record in South America”
May 30, 2019 | Briefing Book 673

The Chernyaev Diary 1979
“comrades, we have entered into a period of senility at the ruling top that is very dangerous for our country”
“all Germans share one history, therefore in their minds there is a feeling of impotence and inconceivability of permanently maintaining this ridiculous construct of West Berlin”
“We have fallen terribly behind capitalism. And there is nothing left to justify this gap”
May 25, 2019 | Briefing Book 672

Kennedy Warned Israeli Leaders in 1963 That U.S. “Commitment and Support” Could be “Seriously Jeopardized” Absent Inspection of Dimona Reactor
U.S. Intelligence Estimated That by Mid-1960s Dimona Could Produce Enough Plutonium For “One or Two Weapons A Year”
May 2, 2019 | Briefing Book 671

Redactions: The Declassified File
Mueller Report Censorship Raises Question: What’s the Government Hiding?
Documents Show It’s an Art Not a Science – Vast Over-classification
Apr 18, 2019 | Briefing Book 670

Declassification Diplomacy: Trump Administration Turns Over Massive Collection of Intelligence Records on Human Rights and Argentina
47,000 Pages of CIA, FBI, NSC, DOD and State Dept. Records Touted as “Largest” Government-to-Government Transfer of Declassified Documentation
National Security Archive Commends Completion of U.S. Government’s Special Argentina Project as ‘Model of Declassification Diplomacy’ and Major Contribution to the Cause of Human Rights and History
Apr 12, 2019 | Briefing Book 669

Kissinger State Department Insisted that South Koreans Break Contract with French for Reprocessing Plant
State Department Cautioned that “Normal Reactor Grade Plutonium Could be Used in...Bomb Designs”
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News Stories Citing and Quoting the Archive in 2019


“Turkey Has Long Had Nuclear Dreams” by Colum Lynch Foreign Policy 11 November 2019.

“Judge in Case of Qaeda Suspect Rules Prosecutors Distorted Evidence” The New York Times 9 November 2019


“The United States Overthrew Iran’s Last Democratic Leader” by Raham Alvandi and Mark J. Gasiorowski, Foreign Policy 30 October 2019.

“How the U.S. Found Out About Russia’s First Nuclear Test 70 Years Ago” by Colum Lynch, Foreign Policy 4 October 2019.


“Transcript Shows That Kissinger Dreaded All-Out Israeli Victory in Yom Kippur War” by Colum Lynch, Foreign Policy 9 August 2019.

“U.S. Researcher Highlights Importance of Cuba Travel Law” by Peter Kornbluh, Prensa Latina 2 August 2019.

“Congress Finally Challenges the Cuba Travel Ban” by Peter Kornbluh, The Nation 1 August 2019.

“Guatemala Declares War on History” by Column Lynch, Foreign Policy 30 July 2019.


“The NSA knows its weapons may one day be used by its targets” by Shannon Vavra, CYBERSCOOP 14 May 2019.


“When in Doubt, Redact: The Mueller report is hardly the first time officials have gone heavy on the black pen” by Fred Kaplan, Slate 18 April 2019.

“Secrecy is subjective' when government censors redact documents” interview of Tom Blanton by PRI’s The World 17 April 2019.


“How to ensure we have a more open, accountable government Congress must strengthen the Freedom of Information Act” by Nate Jones, The Washington Post 3 March 2019.

“Taiwan’s 20th Century Brush With a Nuclear Capability” The Diplomat 30 January 2019.


“No, the president can't destroy records. Here's why” interview of Tom Blanton on PRI’s The World 14 January 2019.