

# How the National Security Archive Uses the FOIA to Expand Access to Our History

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**NATIONAL  
SECURITY  
ARCHIVE**

30+ YEARS OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACTION

# About the National Security Archive



35+ YEARS OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACTION



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**After Ayotzinapa Podcast Wins IRE Journalism Award**  
"Jaw-dropping chronicle" honored for "Longform Journalism in Audio"

**The Movement and the "Madman"**  
Archive Analyst Interviewed by Makers of PBS Documentary on Nixon's "Madman Theory"

**Archive Testifies to U.S. Senate on Over-classification**  
Recommends more authority and resources for National Archives

**Filming Armageddon**  
Secret SAC Movie Includes Dr. Strangelove-esque Dramatization of Nuclear Combat Operation



**Filming Armageddon: 1960s Air Force Movies Depict U.S. Preparations for Nuclear War**

## BLOG



**NSArchive Activity Round-up: FRINFORMSUM 3/30/2023**  
Mar 30, 2023

**National FOIA Portal Should be Made Priority as Agencies Prepare for Decommissioning of FOIA Online:**

## LATEST POSTINGS



**After Ayotzinapa Podcast Wins Prestigious Journalism Award**  
Apr 3, 2023 | News



**The Movement and the "Madman"**  
Mar 24, 2023 | Briefing Book

## SEARCH DOCUMENTS



Browse and search through thousands of declassified primary-source materials.

*For all topics:*

[Visit the Virtual Reading Room >>](#)



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# Who We Are

- Founded in 1985 by journalists, public interest groups, historians, Congressmen
- Broaden public debate; press for objective classification policies; preserve record
- More than 70,000 Freedom of Information Act requests filed from 1985-2022
- 80+ FOI cases litigated as plaintiff, counsel, or *amicus curiae*
- 5 million pages on file; 50+ books in print by Archive staff, fellows
- 1999 George Polk Award: “piercing self-serving veil of government secrecy”
- Provided documents for legal cases in twelve different countries; in Mexico, Guatemala, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Indonesia, Rwanda, Italy, and Spain.

## Projects

All Projects  
Able Archer 83 Sourcebook  
Afghanistan-Taliban  
Brazil  
Chile  
China  
Colombia  
Cuba  
Cyber Vault  
Environmental Diplomacy  
Genocide Documentation  
Guatemala  
Human Rights  
Indonesia  
Intelligence  
Iran-U.S. Relations  
Iraq  
Japan  
Korea  
Mexico  
Nuclear Vault  
Nunn-Lugar  
Openness in Russia and Eastern Europe  
Russia Programs  
Southern Cone  
Torture Archive  
Vietnam



### Vietnam Project

*The National Security Archive organizes its main research activities through projects that focus on U.S. policy toward specific geographic regions, significant historical episodes, or topics of broad interest in the areas of foreign affairs or national security. We choose projects based on their expected contribution to public understanding of either a particular subject or the U.S. policy process in general, especially if there's a likelihood of breaking free important new records (chiefly through the Freedom of Information Act). Click on the links below to view current and past projects:*

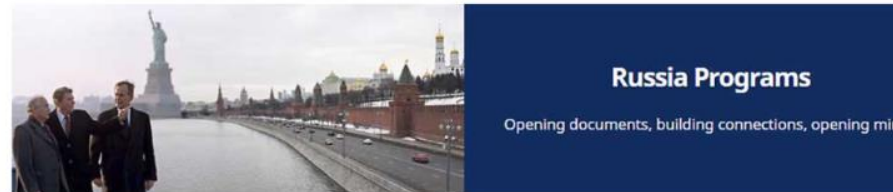


### The Torture Archive



### Southern Cone Documentation Project

U.S. Policy, Archives, Human Rights and Justice in the Southern Tip of the Western Hemisphere.



### Russia Programs

Opening documents, building connections, opening minds

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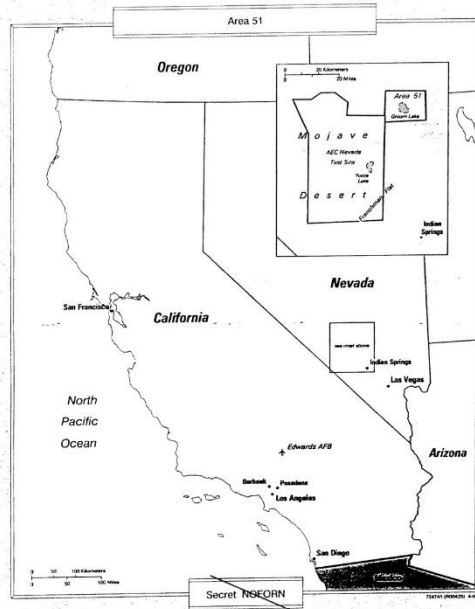


# CIA Confirmation of Area 51

C00190094

Approved for Release: 2013/06/25

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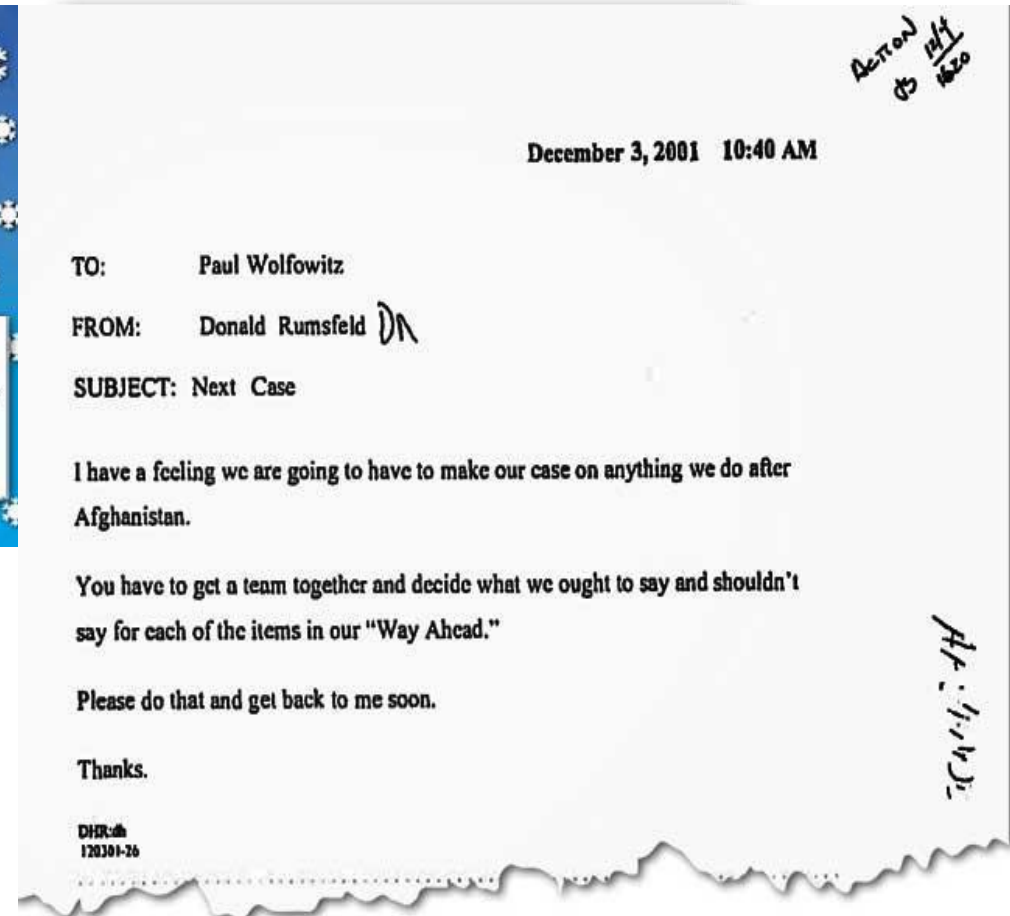
Approved for Release: 2013/06/25



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# What We Have Pried Loose From the Govt



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*Hussein, Saddam Al-Tikriti*

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## Digital National Security Archive

Documenting the making of U.S. foreign and national security policy

*Login if you are a subscriber*

*Ask your library to subscribe or request a free trial*

### ABOUT DNSA

The Digital National Security Archive is an invaluable online collection of more than 100,000 declassified records documenting historic U.S. policy decisions.

DNSA provides authoritative access to the original documents—most of them formerly classified and previously unavailable—that underlie the crucial decisions facing presidents from Harry Truman to Barack Obama.

Researchers can directly access the documents that shaped responses to issues ranging from the origins of the Cold War to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and beyond.

### LATEST PUBLICATIONS



#### The Afghanistan War and the United States, 1998-2017

Covering the key periods of the 20-year U.S. war in Afghanistan, this timely collection provides researchers with a trove of revealing primary documents, chiefly from the Bush and Obama years.

Largely the product of decades of Freedom of Information Act requests and appeals, these records obtained from the State Department, CENTCOM, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and other agencies detail many of the problems that bedeviled the American-led occupation, including reconstruction efforts, diplomatic relations with the Afghan government, Pakistan's double-sided games, Taliban-al Qaeda relations, corruption, and narcotics.



#### The Diplomacy of Climate Change: U.S. Policy from the Montreal Protocol to the Paris Agreement, 1981-2015

This timely collection is unrivaled in its scope and the quality of its primary sources exploring one of the pivotal issues of our era.

Covering 35 years of key developments and controversy, it details



Choice Magazine (ACRL) names the **Digital National Security Archive** an "outstanding academic title for 2018"

### PRAISE FOR DNSA

"I am especially grateful for the work of the National Security Archive ... The Archive is a national treasure. Its digital collections proved invaluable to my research."

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# Recent Work

THE AFGHANISTAN PAPERS A secret history of the war

## AT WAR WITH THE TRUTH

U.S. officials constantly said they were making progress. They were not, and they knew it, an exclusive Post investigation found.

KONAR PROVINCE, 2010 (Moises Saman/Magnum Photos)



A confidential trove of government documents obtained by The Washington Post reveals that senior U.S. officials failed to tell the truth about the war in Afghanistan throughout the 18-year campaign, making rosy pronouncements they knew to be false and hiding unmistakable evidence the war had become unwinnable.

snowflake

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 *DR*  
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 Deputies are working on it." Well I can't believe that it takes that many months to figure it out.

If this were something DoD could do alone, we could get it done. Apparently it is not something that requires an interagency process. Once it goes into the interagency process, it sinks out of sight.

What do you propose we do? How do we get control of the levers so that we can influence what's going on? How do we decide what ought to happen, and then get all the military, diplomatic, humanitarian threats coming through the needle-head?

*CIA* EO 12958 1.4(c)<25Yrs

What do we do about finding out what [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 Afghanistan unless we take care to see that there is something going on that will provide the stability that will be necessary for us to leave.

Help!

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Doc. # 5

09-11-22-10

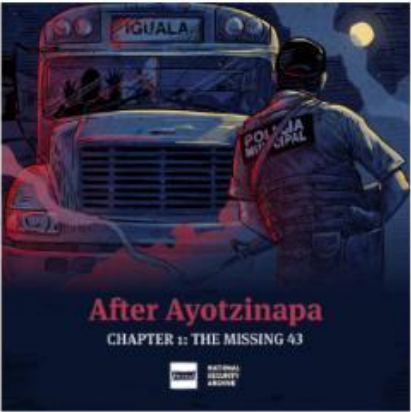
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30+ YEARS

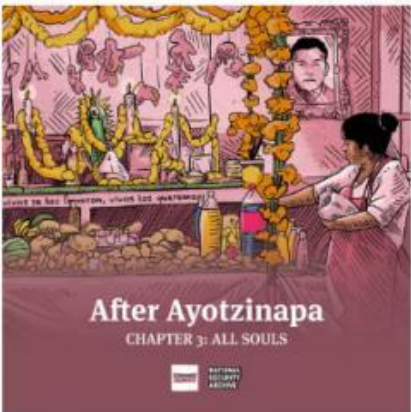
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# After Ayotzinapa Podcast Wins Prestigious Journalism Award



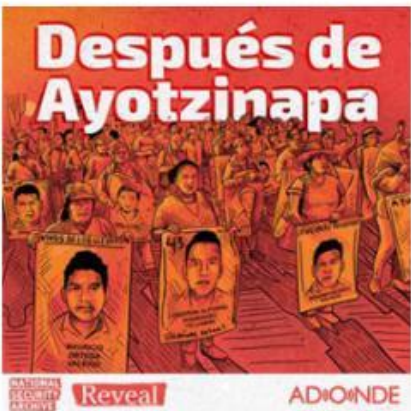
Listen to "After Ayotzinapa"  
Chapter 1: The Missing 43



Listen to "After Ayotzinapa"  
Chapter 3: All Souls



Listen to "After Ayotzinapa"  
Chapter 2: The Cover-Up



"Después de Ayotzinapa" Podcast



## Filming Armageddon: Air Force Movies Depict U.S. Preparations for Nuclear War



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ON



## WITNESSES: MODERNIZING THE GOVERNMENT'S CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

**SENIOR  
DIRECTOR**

Liberty & National  
Security Program



**ELIZABETH  
GOITEIN**

**DIRECTOR**

National Security  
Archive



**THOMAS  
BLANTON**

**FORMER  
DIRECTOR**

Information Security  
Oversight Office



**JOHN  
FITZPATRICK**

**SENIOR  
FELLOW**

Cato Institute



**PATRICK G.  
EDDINGTON**

**CHAIRMAN PETERS**



**HOMELAND SECURITY  
& GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

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## How Much Overclassification?

**“Massive”** – Erwin Griswold, Former Solicitor General of the United States (who prosecuted the Pentagon Papers case in 1971), quoted in the *Washington Post*, February 15, 1989.

**“50-50”** – Carol A. Haave, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Counterintelligence and Security, August 24, 2004 hearing of this Subcommittee.

**“Even beyond 50%”** – J. William Leonard, Director of the Information Security Oversight Office, National Archives and Records Administration, August 24, 2004 hearing of this Subcommittee.

**60%** -- Information Security Classification Appeals Panel rulings for declassification against agency claims of secrecy, according to J. William Leonard testimony, August 24, 2004 (“60-some-odd percent of the time the panel will override an agency's determination in whole or in part”).

**75%** -- Thomas H. Kean, Chair of the 9/11 Commission and former Governor of New Jersey, quoted in Cox News Service, July 21, 2004 (“Three-quarters of what I read that was classified shouldn't have been”).

**90%** -- Rodney B. McDaniel, executive secretary of the National Security Council under President Reagan, quoted in Moynihan Commission report (1997), p. 36, saying only 10% of classification was for “legitimate protection of secrets.”

**“Laughable if it wasn't so insulting”** – Senator Trent Lott (R-Mississippi), on the CIA's redaction of the Senate Intelligence Committee report on Iraq weapons of mass destruction, quoted in Cox News Service, July 21, 2004.

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PAGE 1 OF 3

**BIOGRAPHIC DATA**

CHILE  
Gen Augusto PINOCHET Ugarte  
January 1973

(U) **NAME:** Gen Augusto Pinochet Ugarte (pee-noh-CHET), Army.

(U) **POSITION:** President (chief of state since 12 Sept 1973; position officially named President of the Government Junta, 12 Sept 1973-June 1974; Supreme Chief of the Nation and Head of the Executive Branch June-Dec 1974; President since 18 Dec 1974); and Commander in Chief of the Army (since 24 Aug 1973).



(U) 1973

~~(S/NFD)~~ **SIGNIFICANCE:** Gen Pinochet, an intelligent, ambitious, professionally competent and experienced Infantry officer, is widely admired and respected by fellow officers. He became President and the strongest member of the Government Junta (composed of the four service commanders) following the 11 Sept 1973 military coup, the first in Chile since 1931, which overthrew the government of Marxist-Socialist Salvador Allende Gossens (President, 1970-1973). In June 1974, the Junta structure changed and Pinochet became head of the executive branch of the government, while continuing as head of the Junta, which became the legislative branch. Gen Pinochet would have preferred that the Armed Forces, and particularly the Army, remain in their traditional role as a professional, apolitical force that does not involve itself with partisan politics. The deteriorating economic and political situation, however, forced Pinochet reluctantly to join in the military intervention. The Junta abolished Congress and all political parties but claims to be moving towards a return to democracy. It is most concerned with rebuilding Chile, especially the economy; obtaining foreign arms purchases and making other preparations against the threat of war with Peru; and improving Chile's world image regarding human rights.

~~(S/NFD)~~ **POLITICS:**

~~(S/NFD)~~ **International:** Anti-Communist and anti-Cuban, Gen Pinochet has always spoken favorably of, and desires to keep close ties with, the United States. He has twice travelled to the U.S. He favors the acquisition of U.S. equipment and the training of Chilean military personnel in U.S. service schools. He shares the common concern of most Chilean Army officers over the threat of a possible invasion of Chile by Peru. Pinochet has served as an instructor at the Ecuadorian Army War College and has travelled to Mexico and the Canal Zone.

UNCLASSIFIED

CLASSIFIED BY DI  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 2  
DECLASSIFY ON 31 Dec 2005

NO FOREIGN DISSEM  
~~SECRET~~

Declassified by DIA

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~

CHILE  
Gen Augusto PINOCHET Ugarte  
January 1973

~~(S/NFD)~~ **Internal:** Gen Pinochet is conservative in his political thinking. It is believed that he remained basically apolitical during the administration of President Allende, viewing the government as legally and constitutionally elected. Pinochet enjoyed the complete confidence of Eduardo Frei Montalva (President, 1964-1970).

~~(S/NFD)~~ **PERSONAL DATA:**

(U) **Birth:** 25 Nov 1915 in Valparaiso, Chile.

~~(S/NFD)~~ **Family:** Wife, Lucia Hierriart Rodriguez de Pinochet (born about 1926; of French ancestry; Roman Catholic; married about 1943; charming, attractive; socially at ease; family is very close; has long been interested in and directed a Catholic assistance program for illegitimate children; in 1973 allegedly strongly denounced the then Army Commander in Chief, Carlos Prats Gonzalez, for his "lackey" relationship with President Allende). Children (5): Lucia (f), born about 1944 (married; is an infant-welfare specialist); Augusto (m), born about 1946 (a military officer); Maria Veronica (f), born about 1950 (married; is a computer programmer); Marco Antonio (m), born about 1957; Jacqueline Marie (f), born about 1959. One daughter lived with her husband, an engineer, in Panama.

~~(S/NFD)~~ **Description:** Caucasian. Large build (5'10", 180 lbs); dark brown hair, green eyes, oval face; fair complexion; has a mustache; wears glasses for reading; quiet; mild-mannered; very businesslike. Very honest, hard working, dedicated. A devoted, tolerant husband and father; lives very modestly. Drinks scotch and pisco scours; smokes cigarettes; likes parties. Sports interests are fencing, boxing, and horseback riding. Member of Geographic Society of Chile. He is well known as a military geographer and has authored three geography books, at least one of which is used as a secondary-school textbook. Enjoys discussing world military problems and would respond to a frank, man-to-man approach.

(U) **Languages:** Native Spanish, some French and English.

(U) **Religion:** Roman Catholic.

(U) **Decorations:** Colombian Order of Merit General José María Córdoba. Ecuadorian Abad Calderon Star (Gold). Peruvian Military Order of Ayacucho. Chilean Military Star of the Armed Forces (Grand Star for Military Merit, for 30 years' service); Goddess Minerva Medal; Minerva Medal.

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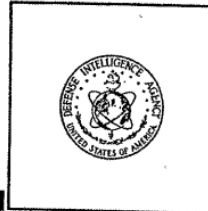
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(b)(1)

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(b)(1)

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(b)(1)

~~(S/REF)~~ POLITICS:

~~(S/REF)~~ International:

He shares the common concern of most Chilean Army officers over the threat of a possible invasion of Chile by Peru. Pinochet has served as an Instructor at the Ecuadorean Army War College and has travelled to Mexico and the Canal Zone.

(b)(1)

(b)(2)

~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~  
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CHILE  
Gen Augusto PINOCHET Ugarte  
January 1975

~~(S/REF)~~

(b)(1)

~~(S/REF)~~ PERSONAL DATA:

(U) Birth: 25 Nov 1915 in Valparaíso, Chile.

~~(S/REF)~~ Family: Wife, Lucía Hériart Rodríguez de Pinochet (born about 1926; of French ancestry; Roman Catholic; married about 1943;

(b)(1)

(b)(6)

Children (5): Lucía (f), born about 1944; Augusto (m), born about 1946; María Verónica (f), born about 1950; Marco Antonio (m), born about 1957; Jacqueline Marie (f), born about 1959.

~~(S/REF)~~ Description: Caucasian. Large build (5'10", 180 lbs); dark brown hair, green eyes, oval face; fair complexion; has a mustache; wears glasses for reading; quiet;

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Member of Geographic Society of Chile. He is well known as a military geographer and has authored three geography books, at least one of which is used as a secondary-school textbook.

(b)(1)

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~~NO FOREIGN DISSEM~~  
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\*\*\* Resending note of 01/21/87 11:55

To: HCGEG --CPU/ Colin L. Powell NSWRP --CFUA Colin L. Powell)

From: William A. Crockell

Subject: Iran-Iraq

Frank opened the discussion by reviewing the shopping list of possible US actions which Dick Murphy had brought over last evening. He said Dennis Poos would be coordinating with Riegan so Frank could brief the President today. Cap felt it clearly was time to drop any pretense of even-handedness. We should no longer talk about ending the war "with no winners or losers." Iran is the aggressor in this case; and we should not only be supportive of Iraq, but should be seen to be supportive. This is an opportunity to recoup some of our standing in the region and regain credibility with the Arab states. With regard to accelerating arrival of the CVBG in the IC, Cap pointed out that if we are going to do it, we should take action now, since it will take a while for the battle group to transit. Defense would not want to put the carrier into the Persian Gulf, but having it on station in the Northern Arabian Sea made sense.

[REDACTED] (b)(1)

This led to a

DISCUSSION

discussion of the FMS debt restructuring issue. The problem is basically a political one, Frank observed. If we provide relief for Egypt and others, the domestic program constituencies will be up in arms, and the heat from the Hill will be intense. Cap commented that there are sound national security reasons for trying to provide Egypt some debt relief. Egypt is critical to the Mideast peace process; and in a contingency, we could well require Egyptian cooperation in the matter of bases, or other support. Cap said he intended to raise the FMS debt issue with the President, and urge him to direct Baker to be more forthcoming. Even if domestic pressures preclude our doing any more, it would be useful for the Administration to be seen (by the Egyptians) as at least attempting to provide greater relief. (Frank asked me to obtain talking points for the President to use with Cap. I passed the requirement to Steve Farrar who has provided them to Bob Pearson.) Discussion then returned to the issue of Murphy's shopping list. Frank continued to go through the items, and Cap was generally supportive and reiterated his view that we should not only take action to assist Iraq but ensure that the assistance is visible.

[REDACTED] (b)(1)

The Iraqis' problem is not lack of weapons, but one of leadership and morale. We need to stiffen them up some way. Frank observed that if we are looking for a symbolic gesture, the sending of a team to discuss their needs with the Iraqis might be a good approach. Cap agreed, and the discussion ended on that note.

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\*\*\* Resending note of 01/21/87 11:55  
To: NSASG ... Colm L. Powell NSW&P --CFOR Colm L. Powell  
From: William A. Cockell

Frank opened the discussion by reviewing the shopping list or possible US actions which Dick Murphy had brought over last evening. He said Dennis Ross would be coordinating with which country so Frank could brief the President today. Frank felt it clearly was time to drop any pretense of even-handedness. We should no longer talk about ending the war "with no winners or losers." Iran is the aggressor in this case; and we should not only be supportive of Iraq, but should be seen to be supportive. This is an opportunity to recoup some of our standing in the region and regain credibility with the Arab states. With regard to accelerating arrival of the CVBG in the IO, Cap pointed out that if we are going to do it, we should take action now, since it will take a while for the battle group to transit. Defense would not want to put the carrier into the Persian Gulf, but having it on station in the Northern Arabian Sea made sense. Someone asked whether there is a non-nuclear battle group presently in the Red that could be used for the IO. No one knew whether one or both of the carriers now in the Red were nuclear.

Classified by: Multiple Sources (b)(1) (S)  
Declassify on: OADR NSC-000151

transit. [redacted] (b)(1)

basically a political one, Frank observed. If we provide relief for the domestic program constituencies will be up in arms, and the heat from the hill will be intense. Cap commented that there are sound national security reasons for trying to provide

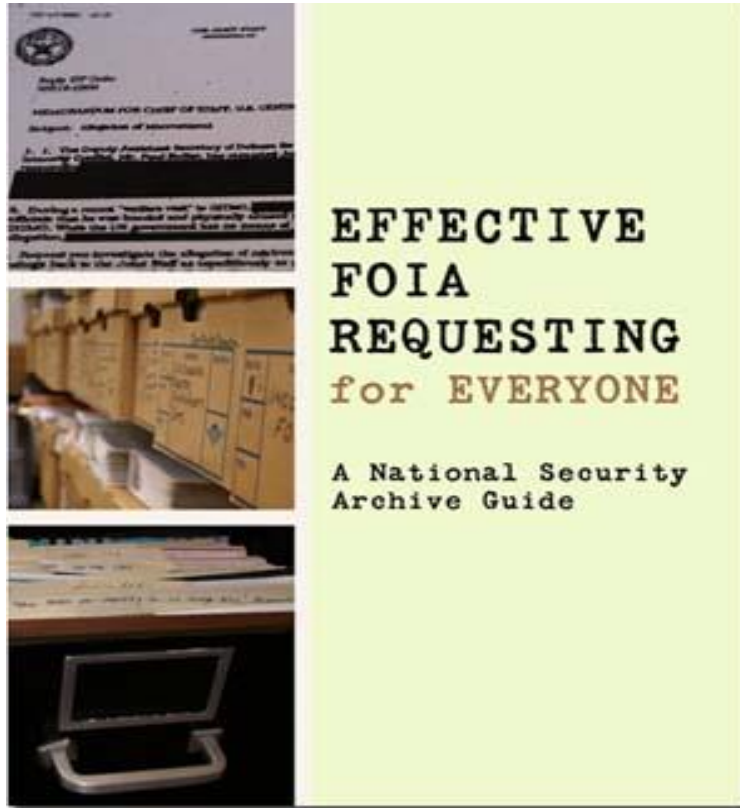
[redacted] (b)(1)

Discussion then returned to the issue of Murphy's shopping list. Frank continued to go through the items, and Cap was generally supportive and reiterated his view that we should not only take action to assist Iraq but ensure that the assistance is visible. "Even if they don't need (U.S.) arms, we should make the offer," he felt, to impress on the Iraqis our bona fides and show the other Arabs as well that we want to be supportive. Others were not sure that an arms sale offer would be appropriate, or that it would play well politically here. There would be perception problems. Some would suggest it was a ploy by the President to deflect criticism of the Iran arms deal. An inconclusive discussion ensued about the legality of providing arms to the Iraqis through third parties, etc. No one was sure how the law might constrain our authorizing other countries to transfer US equipment to Iraq, e.g. Cap agreed the arms would be essentially a symbolic gesture. The Iraqis' problem is not lack of weapons, but one of leadership and morale. We need to stiffen them up some way. Frank observed that if we are looking for a symbolic gesture, the sending of a team to discuss their needs with the Iraqis might be a good approach. Cap agreed, and the discussion ended on that note.

WHITE HOUSE

# Our Tools: FOIA and MDR

# How to File a FOIA Request



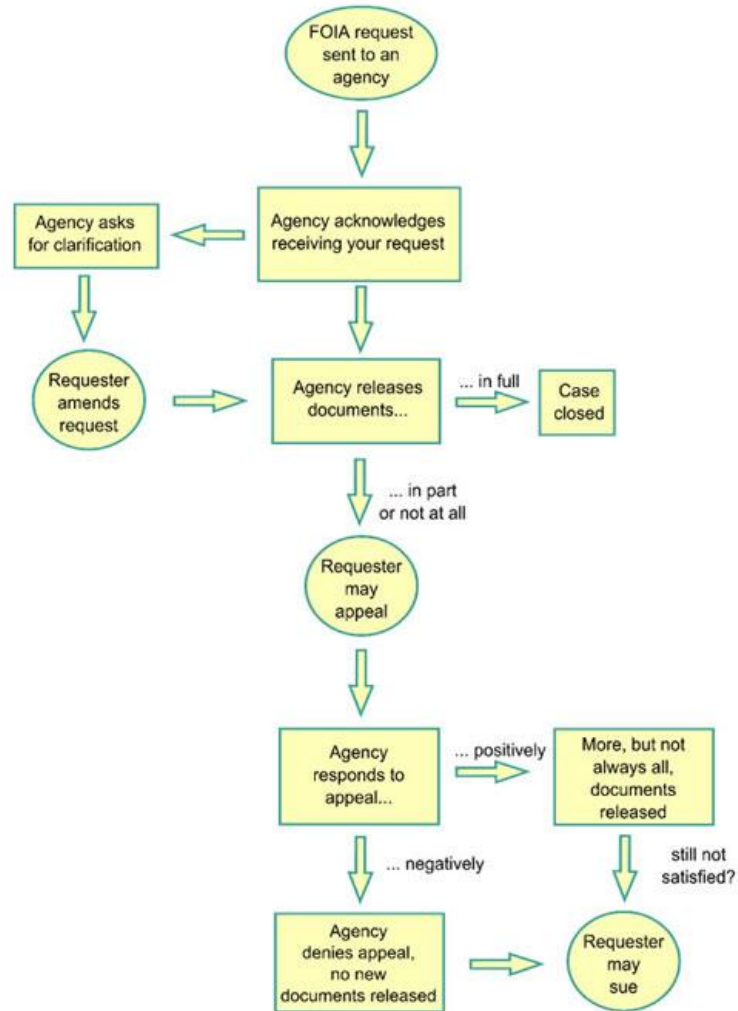
Available for free at  
[http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nsa/foia/foia\\_guide/foia\\_guide\\_full.pdf](http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/nsa/foia/foia_guide/foia_guide_full.pdf)

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# The FOIA Process in a Nutshell



# Which Documents are “FOIA”-able?

- Documents produced by Federal agencies. (State, Military, CIA, NSA, etc.)
- Presidential Documents (five years after the President leaves office.)
- Not documents from the Legislative or Judicial Branch.

# 9 FOIA Exemptions

- (1) National defense or foreign policy
- (2) internal personnel rules and agency practices
- (3) information exempted by statute
- (4) trade secrets, commercial or financial info
- (5) inter-agency or intra-agency communications
- (6) personal privacy
- (7) law enforcement
- (8) agencies regulating financial institutions
- (9) geological and geophysical data



# May I Appeal?

You may appeal “any adverse determination,” including:

- Records withheld in whole or in part (FOIA exemptions)
- Delay
- No records or inadequate search
- Denial of fee waiver, preferred fee status, or expedited processing
- Rejection of request
- Glomar response
- Other decision that will impede access to records

Agency response letter should inform you of right to appeal and specific requirements for appeal.

# Should I appeal?

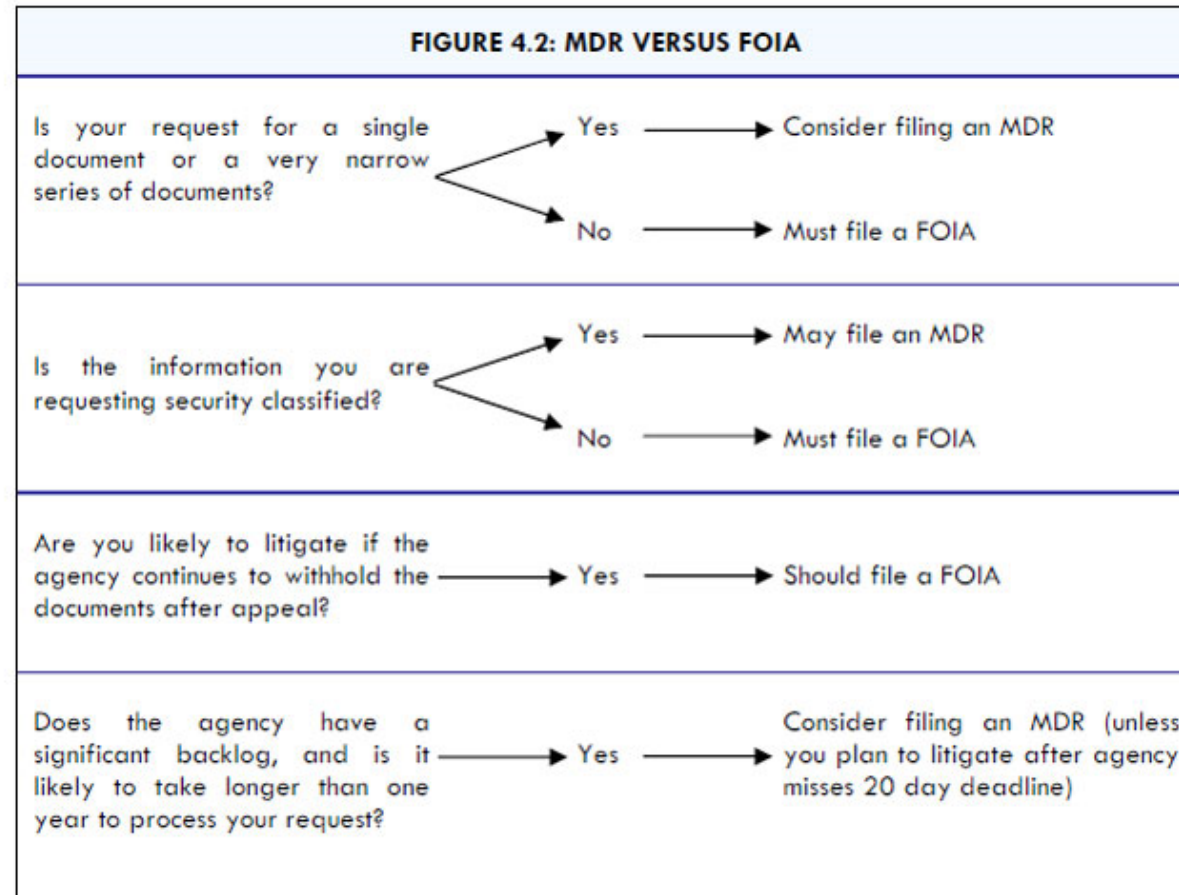
- 1/3 of all requests that are appealed get more information released.
- This means the government is improperly withholding information 1 out of 3 times.

# Always Appeal

- Show that similar information and documents have already been released.
- Show that release of information is in the public interest.
- Argue segregability.
- Common sense often wins the Day.



# Should I file a FOIA or MDR Request?



# Good Resources

- National Security Archive collections
- Newspaper articles
- Memoirs
- Congressional testimony
- Press briefings
- Pull slips at the National Archive
- Think like a bureaucrat. Notes, briefings, background papers, briefing books.