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COMMENTS ON KEN McDONALD'S REPORT TO THE DCI
ON HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM POLICY AND RESOURCES
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While many of Mr. McDonald's comments and keen observations are fundamentally correct, some of his proposals are disturbing and, if approved, could have far reaching negative consequences for the Agency's ability to collect vital foreign intelligence. The viability of CIA's HUMINT collection effort depends on our ability to protect human source relationships and intelligence methods that transcend the passage of time. Once the DO loses jurisdiction over its documents, age notwithstanding, it loses its ability to protect the sources and methods contained in them. If we are not able to assure our sources and potential sources that CIA is an effective clandestine organization, capable of protecting their anonymity, our HUMINT collection capability will suffer. The following statements respond to the Mr. McDonald's proposal enunciated on pages 4 and 5:

1. I have no problem with the 30-year guideline for documents that were created as stand alone documents and not part of a structured project file. DO documents from project files should remain under the DO's control, however, and should be reviewed only in the context of the operation and not singularly. Many documents that on the surface appear nonsensitive would, in the aggregate, reveal sources and methods that we are obligated by law to protect. A more logical approach would be for the DO (not an independent entity) to review the entire project 30 years after its inception or perhaps 10 years after the project file has been retired. We should never relinquish control of DO documents simply because of their age.
2. Arbitrarily transferring control of documents from the originating component would be a dangerous precedent. Individuals who review materials for declassification need to be independent of the supervision of the Chief, History Staff. The Chief Historian's goals are parochial and any supervisory control by him would bias the determinations of the reviewer.
3. I agree with McDonald that the Review Group should be staffed by "experienced senior reviewers." Without input from and interaction with the originating components, however, these reviewers often would be working in a vacuum regardless of their experience or seniority. These reviewers could be authorized to maintain a classification but the final decision to declassify must rest in the originating component.
4. I have no comment on this element of the recommendation.
5. I take strong exception to non-DO entities having a hand in deciding whether CIA presence in a specific locale should be officially acknowledged. This is, and should remain, strictly the responsibility of the DDO or the DCI. It is imperative that the location of stations and bases continue to be protected and should be revealed only in specific instances where there is no room for plausible denial. To officially acknowledge the locations of overseas stations would place American (including non-CIA) personnel in unnecessary jeopardy by focusing undue attention on the local U.S. Mission. There also are foreign relations ramifications. Public revelation of a CIA presence could embarrass the host government, forcing it to yield to adverse public opinion and take drastic measures

against the U.S. Mission. Our ability to conduct clandestine operations, recruit new human sources of intelligence and maintain a normal liaison relationship with the local service could be severely impaired.

6. No comment on this element.