

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON HISTORICAL DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTATION

November 10, 1983

UNCLASSIFIED

American Historical Association

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Other Persons Present

Bureau of Public Affairs (PA):

John T. McCarthy, Deputy Assistant Secretary

The Office of the Historian (HO):

William Z. Slany, The Historian; Neal H. Petersen, Acting Deputy Historian; John P. Glennon, Acting General Editor of Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS); Nina J. Noring, Acting Adviser on Research; Charles S. Sampson, M. Paul Claussen, David W. Mabon, David M. Baehler, Carol A. Becker, Bret D. Bellamy, Karen L. Bryfogle, Suzanne E. Coffman, Stephen DeMuth, Evans Gerakas, Kay K. Herring, Edward C. Keefer, Ronald D. Landa, James E. Miller, David S. Painter, David S. Patterson, William F. Sanford, Stanley Shaloff, Louis J. Smith, Sherrill B. Wells

Classification/Declassification Center (A/CDC):

Ambassador John R. Burke, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Classification/Declassification; William Hamilton, Director, Office of Systematic Review.

Foreign Affairs Information Management Center (A/FAIM):

Paul Washington, Chief, Publishing Services Division; John F. Ellsworth, Chief, Editing Branch; Rita M. Baker, Acting Chief, Documentary Editing Section.

The Office of Plans and Opinion Analysis (PA/OAP):

N. Stephen Kane; Alvin Richman

Others:

Daniel Helmstadter, President, Scholarly Resources, Inc.; Wayne Cole, Professor of History, University of Maryland; Page Miller, American Historical Association; Cathy A. Caplicki, Sign Language Associates

List of Abbreviations

A - Bureau of Administration
CDC - Classification/Declassification Center
CIA - Central Intelligence Agency
FAIM - Foreign Affairs Information Management Center
FAIS - Foreign Affairs Information System
FOIA - Freedom of Information Act
FRUS - Foreign Relations of the United States
FSO - Foreign Service Officer
GPO - Government Printing Office
HO - Office of the Historian
JCP - Joint Committee on Printing
NARS - National Archives and Records Service
PA - Bureau of Public Affairs
SADI - Secretariat Automated Data Index

Morning Session

Mr. Slany called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. He introduced Deputy Assistant Secretary John McCarthy, who welcomed the Advisory Committee. Mr. McCarthy explained that although he had received his B.A. in history, he has been a Foreign Service Officer for some 20 years where his timeframe has become "what happened yesterday". He was glad to be back today in the company of historians. He stated that the publications of the Office of the Historian were essential and important. Although there were problems of declassification, he felt that personnel necessary to do the job were already in place. He expressed his pleasure that members of the Committee would come to Washington to help with the often controversial yet essential program of the Historical Office. He hoped to spend most of the day at the meeting to hear their views.

Mr. Slany said he merely served as the Committee's executive secretary and thus would turn the meeting over to the members. He quickly ran through the agenda and noted that there would be a coffee break in about an hour. Luncheon would be served for the committee at the Foreign Service Club, and would be hosted by William Schneider, Jr., Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology.

He said that operating procedure required that at least a part of the annual meeting be open to the public. The morning session was to be open, but the afternoon session beginning at 2:00 would be closed so that classified material could be discussed.

Mr. Slany stated that the first order of business would be for the Advisory Committee members to elect a chairperson. Mr. Gaddis and Ms. Gruber nominated Mr. May. After Mr. Holsti seconded the motion, members elected Mr. May by acclamation.

Mr. May asked The Historian to present his report.

Mr. Slany then suggested that a number of important issues which had been raised in briefing materials sent in advance to the members might be discussed early in the meeting: the Foreign Relations Users' Survey, Foreign Relations format (both appearance and structure of volumes, including the proposed Vietnam project) and the Foreign Relations production process. As the annual rate of publication of Foreign Relations has slowed down in the last five to eight years, the series is slipping further and further from currency. However, with patient negotiation within the Department, he believes the Office will be able to make progress. Problems in the publication process presently affect the series as never before primarily because technology has switched from linotype to computerized photocomposition. Having already prepared an enormous backlog of volumes (most of which had not yet been cleared for

publication), we believe it would be unwise to continue to compile additional volumes at a rapid rate. Under the circumstances, it is preferable to be very selective. He pointed to the Vietnam project as an example. Through the FOI procedures much of the Vietnam material has already been declassified on a helter-skelter basis. The available record should be gathered and combined with the remainder of the basic historical material in its proper historical context. He said the Office of the Historian was also examining other topics such as the US-USSR conflict over Cuba in the early 1960's, material which many people are also requesting under FOI.

The Office is also exploring other projects, for example, American Foreign Policy: Current Documents. These volumes bring together many documents, all of which have already been available, and when published, put more of the foreign affairs record into the public domain. In addition, other records can be published on microfilm, which will further widen access to diplomatic records.

He said that policy-supportive historical research has been given some priority within the Office of the Historian. The Department needs historical insight and advice. The Office of the Historian can either provide it itself or reach those in the academic community who can provide it. After more than a year, the Office has established a system of priority topics. Some research has taken the form of narratives, some has been produced as documentary collections, and some as chronologies. The Office of the Historian has been trying to find a mix which will be useful to policy makers. In addition, the Office has attempted to find the most feasible method to reach out to the academic community for specialized policy studies that cannot be done readily by the staff of 22 historians. The Department needs to be reminded of what the Historical Office can do, because the Office has probably lost some of its Departmental identity in the last decade.

Whereas historical research studies are regarded as useful tools to policy makers, Office advocacy of liberal disclosure and access policies may threaten policy makers and make their work more difficult.

The Office feels responsible for keeping the Department and the academic community aware of access policies in other governments. Mr. Petersen is directing a project to canvas foreign ministries around the world regarding their own policies on access to diplomatic records.

We are trying to work within the Department of State to identify important records-- especially lot files--to preserve for historical research. Record-keeping in the Department needs all the help it can get, and we are trying to provide our expertise and help to maintain records properly.

Mr. Slany continued that the Office has become an advocate of good records-keeping despite the irritation it may cause elsewhere in the Department. The problem is more difficult with the more recent records being kept on computer tape and microfilm. The Office must help to work out how these tapes can be accessed at NARS and how they can be used by diplomatic historians. Historical records must be permanent, accessible, and free from tampering and loss. Some of the Office staff would have to work on this.

Mr. Slany noted that Mr. McCarthy and the Bureau of Public Affairs have supported the Office financially and in other ways. Mr. Slany said that while there had been some shrinkage in the staff, the Office of the Historian will be recruiting new members. There are still limits on recruiting. Under OPM regulations, the Office provides position descriptions, while OPM provides registers of "qualified" applicants.

In response to Mr. May's query as to what steps the Office of the Historian was taking in helping to preserve the historical record, Mr. Slany replied that the Office was trying to have an input into the Foreign Affairs Information System (FAIS). Mr. May asked Mr. Slany to say more about keeping the historical record straight. Mr. Slany replied that cables are now kept on line in the computer for about six months and then are dumped off onto tapes and microfiche. This process has been trimmed and adjusted frequently since the early 1970's. The difficulty for the Office has been in figuring out all these changes and gaining access to the records. There is a fear that perhaps the computerized information may be lost or that the programmers who have hand-crafted the software might someday disappear. The Office has attempted to participate in various committees to give advice on how records can best be preserved. Lot files are another problem. How can powerful, important Bureaus of the Department be persuaded to incorporate their records into a computerized system? The Office seeks to hire an expert on machine-readable records.

Mr. Slany then mentioned that the Office might begin to prepare a nucleus of highly classified current records on certain important subjects which could be provided instantly to policy makers on request. The Department would have to feel comfortable that the records would be safe in historians' hands. The idea is to capture those documents of transcendent importance on the computer soon after the events, not 25 years later. When the records are on paper the problem is the time involved in trying to locate them (whether in Bureau offices or FAIM), negotiating access to them, and then ensuring that they are not screened or destroyed--actions which would compromise the historical record.

Mr. May asked whether the Office planned to do this independently or through the Executive Secretariat. Mr. Slany replied that he did not envisage the Office doing this independently, but that there is a bureaucratic problem in getting Office input into the area of records keeping. Right now the Office

was only beginning to edge into the door. When Mr. May asked where the responsibility for records keeping rests now, Mr. Slany said that it rests in the Executive Secretariat which has its own computer system (SADI) and also in FAIM. We have worked with FAIM in pointing out that the Secretary of State's records, for example, should be preserved separately and not carted off to private depositories.

Mr. McCarthy noted that the Office of the Historian has recently "insinuated" itself in several bureau staff meetings. Office members find out what is going on in the bureaus in this fashion and can help out the bureaus when they begin to ask what has happened on given issues in the past.

Mr. Gaddis asked for information on the prospect of getting a private publishing firm to publish the Foreign Relations series. Mr. Slany said that Publishing Services may also want to comment on difficulties over the past year in working on acquiring a GPO waiver. He said that the current Authorization Act for State, Justice, and Commerce includes a requirement that the Historian of the Department of State report to the two committees on the delay in publication of the Foreign Relations series resulting both from declassification and publication problems. It has not been entirely resolved what steps we can take, but he knows that the Joint Committee on Printing (JCP) is receptive to suggestions.

Mr. Washington said the JCP will listen to a case for change if we can make it. But a strong case, especially evidence that the Government Printing Office (GPO) is slow and costly, is needed to get an exemption from the GPO under Title 44 of the US Code. It is a serious matter, and we do not have agreement within the Department yet. We have different responsibilities. There have been delays in both Publishing Services and also in the GPO where subcontracting is often involved. We have two options, one of which is a partial exemption which would entail having direct typesetting done by outside contractors. However he does not have the authority to act independently in this. He agrees with Mr. Slany that there are two aspects: first, the transition from hot type to a mix of new technologies, and second, the need to get attitudes and priorities changed at the GPO and elsewhere regarding the still unresolved question as to whether or not volumes are finally declassified when they go to typesetting. He said Mr. Slany was correct in his time frame of 17-18 months for release after declassification. Mr. Washington said he was willing to go along to get a waiver from the JCP, but we would have to make the case first.

Mr. Gaddis said he was puzzled. Weren't the volumes declassified before they were sent to the printer?

Mr. Washington replied no, the last two volumes had to be purged of classified material. It slows the system to have to "cut and paste." He said that \$100,00 per volume was much too high, that \$30,000-\$50,000 should be the range. GPO prices were almost twice as high for the entire production as commercial publishing would be.

Ms. Gruber asked how that affected the cost to the purchaser.

Mr. Washington replied that GPO set the price too high. He said he had questioned the GPO pricing format, and that GPO was thinking about letting the agencies come in and negotiate.

Mr. Gaddis asked about paperback editions. Mr. Slany said that GPO has told us that the price differential from hard cover may not be very large.

When Mr. Gaddis then asked whether the new production technologies for the 1955-1957 series might not solve many of these production problems, Mr. Glennon responded, "We would hope so." Mr. Slany remarked that we have been too optimistic in the past.

Mr. Rubin noted that his own experience with delays in American Society of International Law (ASIL) publications suggested that the Office's optimism should be restrained. Mr. Rubin added that he was also surprised that galley proofs rather than manuscripts were reviewed for declassification and wanted further explanation of the declassification process, including reactions to the problems mentioned in Ian Black's recent article in the Washington Post.

Mr. Slany replied that it was easier for reviewers to read galley proofs or page proofs than photocopies of the actual documents. Galley proofs also look more authoritative. He commented further that the Office tried to explain to the CDC why documents should be declassified, such as showing that the information already is in the public domain. Our role now, however, is much more difficult because many more people and agencies are involved in the declassification process. We are ground between competing forces. The declassification process is now institutionalized. However, he believed Ian Black's article to be too pessimistic. He said we must realize that the system we have was unavoidable -- that we couldn't go back to the procedures of ten to fifteen years ago. If no one advocated freer access within the government, then the outside community questions us. Conversely, advocating freer access causes Department insiders to question us.

Ms. Gruber asked if the Office of the Historian operated as an alien presence within the Department.

Mr. Slany replied that it was alien only in the sense that the study of history lies outside the daily operational scope of the Department.

Mr. Gaddis inquired whether Mr. Slany was talking only of President Reagan's recent Executive Order or more generally. Mr. Slany said that the historical record is not always favorable to the Department, yet it is the Office's task to bring this information to light. The Department must be informed where the smoking guns are. Whether or not it could be published, the Historical Office was

responsible for compiling a complete, accurate foreign affairs record. The Department needed such a record, even if its sensitivity in places prevented full disclosure.

Deputy Assistant McCarthy responded that the size and the importance of the U.S. government in the period currently being declassified was a new phenomenon, and that this added to the problem.

Mr. Gaddis then wondered whether the declassification problems have taken a quantum jump over the last year or whether the process has been more gradual. Mr. Slany said it has been gradual, and our task is to educate the reviewers.

Mr. Rubin then cited AHA Executive Secretary Gammon's comments in the Washington Post article on growing difficulties in declassification. Mr. Rubin stated that resolutions passed by the ASIL annual meetings had endorsed faster publication of Foreign Relations until last year when there was no such resolution because he believed that progress had been made and one was no longer necessary. From his own experience in the Department of State, he believes there is overclassification of documents, and then cited a recent example of denial of publication of a document by the Legal Adviser's Office, even though the information had been published in the New York Times.

Mr. Gaddis remarked that the tone of this year's report by the Historian was much less optimistic than last year's. Then there were more problems with GPO than with declassification, but this does not appear to be true this year. Mr. Glennon replied that the two problems are somewhat interrelated. Last year at this time six volumes had been declassified, and in the past it was reasonable to assume that they would all be published in a year. But only three have been printed, and three more will not come out until 1984. Two more have been declassified, so five are in the publisher's pipeline. Declassification is still slow. There is much more cooperation today and we are doing much better, but we still are not at the pace we desire. There are over 60 volumes in the pipeline, including the 1958-1960 and Vietnam volumes now being compiled. Three volumes in linotype this year cost well over \$100,000 per volume. The lag time is now 19 months; one volume declassified in November 1981 has still not been published. This is a difficult transition period.

Mr. May thought that the declassification problems might well increase with documents in the mid-1950's and beyond.

Mr. Slany raised the question of what constitutes an adequate record for publication. Should we go forward even for the early 1950's when there are some key missing documents? What is a reasonable level of documentation, one that can still justify publication? This is an agonizing problem. We cannot be intransigent with the CDC. We have to work with them. Some portion

of the compiled record will probably always be denied declassification at 25 or 30 years. The Historical Office has no clear measure of what an "adequate" level of documents may be. Mr. Gaddis remarked that the user survey is clear on this; a majority preferred later publication of a fuller record.

Is it likely, Mr. Gaddis continued, that there will be a shift in the future to jump ahead to more easily declassified areas, such as in the Vietnam volumes? Mr. Slany responded that the record is compromised to some extent if we do not proceed across the board. This problem has been argued within the Office, but we do not want to compile in a helter-skelter fashion. Mr. Gaddis surmised that the Office might want the Advisory Committee's advice on the matter.

The Advisory Committee meeting then adjourned at 10:33 a.m. for a short break.

User Survey

Mr. Glennon reported on the results of the user survey. (Messrs. Richman and Kane, of the Office of Plans and Opinion Analysis, had worked on the survey, and joined the meeting at this point.) He noted that the Committee had received copies of the report.

Mr. Glennon addressed first the selection of the audience for the user survey. The Office of the Historian did a study of citations in scholarly journals to identify the authors of works on Foreign Relations-related topics since 1861. The citation study determined that these authors were primarily SHAFR members, with a few OAH and AHA members also. The Office of Plans and Opinion Analysis then proceeded to make a composite mailing list of over 1600 names composed of 733 SHAFR members and 873 persons on PA's list of individuals interested in Foreign Relations.

Mr. Glennon characterized the response to the survey as "excellent." Of the 1606 persons surveyed, 49% completed and returned the survey. Normally, twenty percent is considered a good response to an unsolicited survey. Mr. Glennon outlined the four categories of questions on the survey: (1) use of the series, (2) access to the series, (3) Foreign Relations content, and (4) demographics, or user profile.

The users' profile revealed that 82% of the users are Ph.D.s, that 90% consider themselves "historians," and that 63% classify themselves diplomatic historians. Mr. Glennon commented that this latter figure was surprisingly low--less than two-thirds of the sample.

The survey revealed that Foreign Relations is a heavily-used and highly valued commodity. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents found the series "vital" to their research, while 18% characterized it as "very useful," a total of 95%. Ninety-six percent felt that

the study of diplomatic history would suffer without Foreign Relations. Ninety-three of the respondents used the series as a research tool, while 70% used it as a teaching aid.

The questions on access to the series yielded surprising results. 78% of the respondents had "convenient" access to Foreign Relations. 80% used library copies, and 53% said they would be interested in buying paperback copies if they were available. Mr. Glennon commented that the Historical Office has made no decisions yet on the feasibility of providing Foreign Relations volumes in paperback. GPO does not recommend binding the volumes in paper because of their generally heavy use--most FRUS volumes are sent to libraries. Further, GPO cannot promise greatly reduced prices for paperback volumes; the estimates they are quoting are only a few dollars cheaper than hardbound copies. Mr. Glennon continued that Paul Washington of Publishing Services had questioned GPO's estimates and was investigating them further. In the end, binding the volumes in paper might not be feasible, for "Foreign Relations is not a mass sale item."

Mr. Glennon ended his presentation with a discussion of the questions on editorial features. These questions addressed the series' comprehensiveness as well as its presentation. 57% of the respondents favored thorough documentation of events. 64% favored later publication of a more complete record rather than earlier publication of less comprehensive volumes. Mr. Glennon specified that the survey did not ask whether the respondents preferred a 20-year versus a 30-year line for publication of documents; after much discussion in The Office of the Historian and OAP, it was decided that the survey could not present this question adequately. The question on comprehensiveness was viewed as a way to get around this problem. Regarding "editorial innovations," which Mr. Glennon defined as items such as methodological statements and identification lists, the response was very favorable at 77%. The Office intends to include methodological statements in all Foreign Relations volumes beginning with the Vietnam volumes now in preparation.

On the question of microform supplements to the series, 99% of the respondents stated that they had used microform and about one-third found it "physically uncomfortable" to use. Organization by subject parallel to that of the Foreign Relations volumes was generally favored. Mr. Glennon stated that the Historical Office was grappling with the question of microform and intended to pursue it. The Office of the Historian was unsure about pegging microform publications directly to the volumes because of cross-referencing and clearance problems. Instead, the Historical Office is considering microform publication of special collections not available anywhere else which would provide a significant amount of material to scholars.

Mr. Holsti asked what kind of "special material." Mr. Glennon responded that certain lot files were one such group. He defined the difference between the lot files and the central files, citing the Secretariat's conference files and NSC files as examples of the latter. He stated also that The Office of the Historian could "contrive" lot files, giving as an example the materials used in the preparation of the 1955-57 volume on China relating to the Wang-Johnson discussions--full texts of telegrams giving nearly verbatim records of meetings, correspondence. This package would be given to the CDC for clearance and would receive a lot file number. Once it had been declassified, it would be eligible for microform publication. It would not be a part of Foreign Relations, but would be useful to the scholar.

Mr. Slany added that A/CDC has declassified a number of bodies of documents from the late 1940's and early 1950's including the Daily Summaries, Secretary's Memoranda of Conversation, and Current Economic Developments. The Office of the Historian wants to get this documentation into the public domain before new events require that it be reclassified, as has sometimes happened with Foreign Relations. He concluded that the Office is thinking of microform supplements in terms of "unique" bodies of documents particularly useful for study of diplomatic history.

Returning to the issue of publishing early with an incomplete record or publishing later with a more complete record, Mr. Slany stated that Foreign Relations is intended to be the best, most comprehensive record of American diplomatic history. A/CDC and others are obliged to withhold sensitive materials after the Office of the Historian has collected the best, fullest record for use within the Department. When material is not declassified, has the Historical Office already done its job by making it available to the Department, or must the Office struggle within its own bureaucracy to assure release? Mr. Slany solicited the Committee's advice and guidance.

Mr. Rosecrance asked whether a 35-year declassification line might persuade the government to open the entire record. Slany responded that there was no reason to be sanguine that the effect would be an improvement. Mr. Rosecrance commented that even the British had once had a 50-year line and then had published everything. Mr. Slany responded that there were bodies of U.S records that would have to be protected much longer than 50 years. Mr. Gaddis added that the British had never let everything out.

In response to a question from Mr. Holsti, Mr. Slany noted that the Office of the Historian presently considered each volume on its own merits in considering whether the record was complete enough to publish, and he pointed to the forthcoming volume dealing with Latin America, 1952-1954, in which Guatemala posed a particular problem.

Mr. Holsti asked if the question of withholding materials would be addressed in the methodological statement. Mr. Slany answered that the Office of the Historian would try, but that we could not point to any specific agency as being responsible for not releasing the documents. Mr. Holsti then inquired whether the Office could point to where the record as presented in Foreign Relations is complete and where it is less so. Mr. Gaddis added that in using files at NARS, he had found helpful the sheets noting where a classified document had been withdrawn, and that he wondered if a comparable procedure would be useful in the printed volumes. Mr. Slany asked the Committee to take up this matter in its report. He stated further that such a procedure had been contemplated for volumes soon to be published. A/CDC and other Department units opposed procedures that might single-out still classified documents and stimulate FOI requests. The Historical Office was eager to include such information for the sake of an accurate record that did not dangerously distort through omission. Mr. Gaddis suggested that perhaps a summary which did not refer to specific documents but which identified the more heavily sanitized areas could be used. Mr. Glennon responded that this had been tried, but that summaries had to be cleared in the Department, too. Ms. Gruber asked if the Historical Office had tried to substitute other materials for withheld documents, and whether this effort had been satisfactory. Mr. Slany answered that it had not.

Mr. Glennon elaborated that there were two kinds of "No" from CDC: "No" meaning "not now," and "No" meaning "not ever." Guatemala, he continued, was a "not ever"; the Historical Office did the best it could. In other cases, (for example, China,) CDC instructed the Office to wait for the demise of Mao and Chou En-lai. We delayed the volume's release, and got the documents declassified. Mr. Gaddis asked if a distinction between the two kinds of "No" would provide the guidelines the Office is seeking. Mr. Rubin stated that it would in the easy cases, but that in the more difficult cases the question should be whether the omission of material distorts what is printed. Mr. Gaddis wondered if the Historical Office could somehow indicate the "no, never" decisions--it would be a clue to researchers that a significant body of documentation is missing. Mr. Glennon answered that this in effect was being done already in the summaries of the volumes' contents. If they are read carefully, one can see that the Historical Office has tried to indicate such omissions. But the summaries still have to be cleared.

Mr. Holsti asked if "No, never" is inflexible. Mr. Glennon answered that "never" is firm enough, defining it as our "working lifetime." Mr. Slany added that another prickly issue was that the delay of publication could cause more documents to be withheld, rather than released.

Mr. Rosecrance raised the question of the integrity of the series. Using the Freedom of Information Act, someone could obtain the sanitized material and undercut the volume by producing a more

complete work. He asked if FOIA differed from Foreign Relations declassification, noting that some historians got "amazing" material declassified through the former. Mr. Slany stated that the broader criteria for declassification used by the Systematic Review (SR) staff of A/CDC produced a far greater volume of cleared papers than the Mandatory Review (MR) Staff were able to clear for occasional FOI requests.

Mr. Holsti asked if SR and MR used the same reviewers. Mr. Slany said no, but added that [William] Hamilton's people [SR] were sympathetically disposed toward Foreign Relations, and were probably more knowledgeable on special historical topics. It is always possible that someone may get documents not in Foreign Relations, but then the Office of the Historian may not have sought out certain types of documents. One of the reasons for a methodological statement is to give the scholar an idea of which sources were used and which were not. The Office of the Historian annotates the volumes to make the context of the published documents perfectly clear.

Mr. Rubin commented that Foreign Relations takes a broad look at an issue, while FOIA deals with particular sets of documents. The scholar spends more time on a particular, narrower subject and thus comes up with a larger number of documents.

Mr. Rosecrance stated that there was an argument here for "conspiracy," a partnership between the different types of reviewers. Mr. Slany suggested that he might wish to address this comment to Ambassador Burke during the afternoon session.

Mr. Gaddis commented that in his field, no one regards Foreign Relations as the definitive work. It is, however, an excellent overview and a guide to the National Archives. It helps the scholar focus his topic and to determine where he needs to go with it. Mr. Rubin added that the scholar has different reasons for going to the Archives than does the Historical Office.

Mr. Slany stated that the Historical Office hoped to make Foreign Relations more useable and more accessible to its usership. Two types of changes were being considered: format and altered mode of presentation. Our goal in changing the physical appearance was to make the volumes both more useful and easier to produce. Mr. Slany felt that the proposed format, samples of which were provided to the Committee members, achieved this. The switch from annual to triennial volumes was made because the former organization multiplied preparation and publication problems. Mr. Slany commented that he knew the Committee and other Foreign Relations users had not seen enough of the new triennial volumes either to condemn or to endorse the change.

Mr. Gaddis asked whether smaller volumes within the triennial cycle could facilitate the publication process. Mr. Slany noted that this approach accorded with the Historical Office's present

thinking. Arranging the foreign policy record in smaller volumes allowed for working with CDC to identify those compilations which could be published earlier, and those which had to be delayed because of clearance problems. This approach would be applied across the board with the 1955-1957 triennium.

Mr. Glennon noted that the existence of parts and appendices can cause confusion when trying to amass a complete set of the series. Although the 1955-57 volumes have now been split, it is too late to do this with the 1952-54 volumes, as some are already out. Mr. Glennon commented that the new organization would make things easier all around: production of the volumes, cost, uniformity in size, less hold-up in publication, no proliferation of parts. He felt that reformatting the pages would make them look cleaner. There would be no physical change in the trim size of the volumes. Mr. Gaddis inquired whether the document file numbers would still be included. Mr. Glennon replied that they would.

Documentating the Vietnam War in the Foreign Relations Series

Mr. Glennon observed that the first step for the Vietnam volumes was achieved with publication of the two-part volume on Indochina for 1952-1954. The 1955-1957 and 1958-1960 volumes, which were compiled earlier, are being expanded and are near completion. Four volumes are planned for the period 1961-1963: one covering 1961, one covering 1962, and two covering 1963. Six historians, the General Editor, and a research assistant are working on the Vietnam series. The compilation schedule established for the volumes is being met. Taking up each of the projected volumes individually, Mr. Glennon noted that the 1955-1957 volume is presently being reviewed, and will be finished this month. CDC review of this volume is in hand and is favorable. Clearance of the volume rests with the NSC. The 1958-1960 volume will be completed and reviewed by February 1984. Compilation of the 1961-1963 volumes will be complete by April; review will be complete by summer. CDC has promised expedited review. Mr. Glennon projected publication of the Vietnam volumes to begin in 1985, and to be complete in 1986.

Looking ahead, Mr. Glennon stated that the Office plan called for taking the series through the 1960's but he noted that the focus would be solely on Vietnam, not the entire Indochina area. This was being done because Vietnam constituted a "window" in declassification which had to be exploited before it closed because of international developments which might have the effect of "resensitizing" some of the documentation. Turning to the Johnson period, Glennon noted that we confront "a bit of a problem" in that the Johnson Library has not processed material beyond 1965 as yet. In the long range, the Historical Office intends to push the series through 1975, although there are no current plans for preparation of volumes for the Nixon period.

Ms. Gruber asked whether the materials used in compiling the series would include domestic developments bearing on Vietnam

policy. Mr. Glennon assured her that such material would be included, especially in the Johnson period.

Mr. Slany asked the Committee to consider the Vietnam volumes in the context of the entire series and to provide guidance on the question of scope. As presently evolving, the Vietnam series could involve a great number of volumes, which would tax the resources of the Office and the declassification resources of the Department. Would the committee prefer a more limited series, in terms of scope, which could be published earlier? Mr. Rosecrance asked whether we couldn't do both - publish substantial volumes as well as an overview. Slany said we could do so. Ms. Gruber asked about the prospects for additional staff to work on the series. Mr. Slany said that the Committee could make such a suggestion.

Mr. Rosecrance asked about the sources used for the project. He noted that during the Kissinger period, off-the-record telephone conversations and back-channel contacts were used. Would the compilers have access to White House and NSC documents? Would there be a full reading? Mr. Mabon replied that for 1955-60 the telcons were well known. There was already access to microfilmed, expurgated versions, to which the Historical Office hoped to add. Mr. Sampson added that the Kennedy tapes are not yet fully transcribed, but that the Historical Office was going to request this. He continued that the compilers had seen most of the material at the Kennedy Library, although some collections, like the Robert Kennedy papers, are still closed. The record appears fairly complete; the Historical Office will know more about this at the end of the compiling for the 1963 volume.

Mr. Slany returned to the question of the desirability of pursuing the publication of a Vietnam series which would be reduced in scope, in order to take advantage of the "window" of declassification before it closed. Mr. Slany commented that the Historical Office may be able to "strike a deal" with the NSC and the White House. By opting for an early but abbreviated sub-series, the Historical Office may be able to receive maximum access if declassification delays publication of a larger more comprehensive series of volumes. The Office of the Historian may be able to "defeat the FOI route" by opening material in "one fell swoop." He then said that he was concerned about the concentration on the 1962-63 period. When, he asked, will compilers reach 1969?

Mr. Gaddis reflected on the academic community's reaction to the project. He stated that he could see the bureaucratic reasons for the project, but he felt some concern about the diversion of resources from the rest of the Foreign Relations series. He could see the project's raising some concern in the profession, which would "welcome [the project's] depth," but question its priority. Mr. Gaddis then asked how the Historical Office's Vietnam project differed from the Center for Military History's Vietnam projects. Mr. Slany requested that the question be deferred until after lunch.

Before closing the session, Mr. May expressed his own misgivings. Our understanding of history is shaped by documentary evidence, he stated. We already have a distorted view of Southeast Asia, and he fears that the Vietnam project may assist this distorted view.

The session adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Afternoon Session (Closed to the Public)Declassification

Ambassador Burke said that he would continue the topic of discussion introduced at lunch. He stated that he had not prepared formal remarks on A/CDC since the relationship to the Historical Office was essentially the same as in the previous year's report. The Ambassador stated that he did however wish to draw the Committee's attention to the activities of the CDC in the field of mandatory review requests. He stated that no document is exempt from mandatory review (which is primarily generated by FOI requests) but that many documents in the mandatory review process are referrals from the Presidential Libraries and are additional to FOIA cases. (He circulated recently declassified samples.) Statistics indicate that in a recent period 1100 mandatory review cases were received from Presidential libraries of which 467 were cleared for declassification, 451 were cleared in sanitized form, and 77 were denied clearances.

Ambassador Burke then drew the Committee's attention to the recent report of the Information Security Oversight Office (ISOO) which contained statistics on declassification by departments, and noted that copies of the report were available.

Next, Ambassador Burke explained that NSDD 84 of March 11, 1983, should be seen as an effort by the administration to control leaks. Administratively, there are two new forms for employees to sign--a general non-disclosure form and a form for people who have access to Special Compartmented Information (SCI). The focus of concern is on pre-publication review of writings by present and former officials of the U.S. Government. The SCI Information form is narrowly focused to three inter-related categories of information which trigger the need for pre-publication review. He noted that a Department of Justice official has stated that the sole purpose of the form is to allow the deletion of classified information. The government, he said, has no intention of deleting or censoring views and opinions which it does not like, even if they might have an adverse impact on U.S. foreign policy. In fact, the new form is not as restrictive as the old one.

The Ambassador reiterated that A/CDC operates only within the confines of its charter and that the relationship between PA/HO and A/CDC is stable. He also stated that he does not perceive the declassification of documents for Foreign Relations to be appreciably slower now than it was under previous systems. As a corollary he stated that the declassification of record blocks by NARS under Department of State funding is proceeding on the timetable agreed upon by the Archivist and the Department.

Mr. Rosecrance inquired if it would be possible for the Advisory Committee to see the A/CDC guidelines for declassification in order to make recommendations. In particular, he wanted to see the guidelines for Foreign Relations. Ambassador Burke replied that the guidelines, which are written for the NARS reviewers and not for Foreign Relations, are classified, but that he would take the question of making them available under advisement. He explained that the guidelines were drawn up with a specific period in mind, in this case the 1950-54 period, and that they were extremely detailed as to what events in which countries were still considered sensitive.

Mr. Gaddis asked if there is any coordination between the Foreign Relations process and the NARS process. He noted from personal experience that in some cases documents actually published in Foreign Relations were not available at NARS. This, he felt, was a result of a lack of communication between the two processes. As an example, he mentioned the Policy Planning Staff papers, many of which were published in Foreign Relations, but not available at NARS. Ambassador Burke indicated that the state of the art does not yet allow for perfect comparison of declassification records between the agencies and hopes it will improve. Mr. Slany felt that this topic was related to a question that Mr. Rosecrance asked in the morning session which had been deferred to the afternoon session so that Ambassador Burke might answer. He asked the Ambassador if the difference in declassification decisions between the Department and NARS (or current DOS standards and hypothetical future DOS standards) or through court decisions on FOIA might result in release of previously classified documents which might reflect adversely on the integrity of Foreign Relations. The Ambassador replied that even internally it happens that there are discrepancies in declassification between Systematic Review (which includes FRUS review) and Mandatory Review. In his opinion Systematic Review (with 12-14 people) declassifies more freely than Mandatory Review (with 30 to 40 people) because the SR reviewers represent longevity and experience in subject areas rather than in the random topics that must be declassified under pressure in Mandatory Review. He explained the administrative and funding reasons for maintaining distance between the two units and stated that he believes that the best solution may be a computerized data base for use by both units. The Ambassador stated CDC's strong desire for such an activity but noted the absence of funding for clerical support made even rudimentary assistance difficult and precluded preparing a comprehensive data base at present.

Mr. Slany mentioned that the Historical Office often had been of assistance to the Mandatory Review Section of CDC by pointing out that documents involved in certain FOIA requests had already been declassified by SR.

Mr. Gaddis observed that there were two different models of declassification--the U.S. model and the British model. The British model had a strict 30-year rule with certain categories exempt from declassification. He asked which model, in the Department's opinion, would result in the release of more documents?

Ambassador Burke felt that it would differ on a case-by-case basis. The problem is that the new executive order does not even provide for SR. The Department has continued SR, but it is not obliged to do so. Other agencies do not feel any obligation to conduct SR. There is no systematic release of documents by the Department of Defense, for example. Moreover, legislation pending in Congress would exempt CIA operational files from FOIA. The Department is concentrating its efforts on Foreign Relations, while trying to get other agencies' documents on a case-by-case basis. His opinion is that the Department of State would be amenable to a timetable of declassification, with the caveat that such a timetable would probably result in much later release than is accomplished by the present system of release via Foreign Relations. The Ambassador suspects the problem of resources for declassification is government-wide and under an automatic declassification system might become a greater problem. A/CDC feels that good relations with other agency counterparts is an effective support that might be damaged under other declassification systems.

Mr. Slany added that the existing system had not been fully explored. Without A/CDC, top policymakers would most likely "take fright" and withhold even more documents. In fact, "if there were no A/CDC, we would have to create one." The key issue is that there is a need for a Department organization, other than the Historical Office, that has the confidence of the top policymakers to carry out declassification of official records. He said that the question of the advisability of a year cut-off system would be clearer later when the existing system had been more fully explored. At present there is a need for better coordination between the Office of the Historian and A/CDC. In addition, the whole operation could do with a "sense of urgency" about its work. Therefore, he was reluctant to speculate on a year when everything would become right. Our efforts, he concluded, would be better spent trying to figure out how to do better what we are already doing.

Ambassdor Burke stated that A/CDC attempts to speed the system and reduce denials by maintaining informal communication between Systematic Review and Mandatory Review, but he is careful to stress the separation between the two in order to prevent diversion of SR staff (which legally might happen under the new directive.) At present, the Department is "robbing Peter to pay Paul" by using MR resources to pay for SR.

In addition, CDC is being "whipsawed right and left" on "surprise" FOIA cases. At present, there are 55-60 law suits pending against the department on FOIA. He cited the case backlog in MR as both a threat to SR and a symptom of the total review problem. The instigation of discovery cases by law firms creates huge search costs and review backlogs. He noted that the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union had sued the Department of Justice to obtain all USG documents relating to political asylum on behalf of Salvadoran illegal immigrants. In this instance, the Department had released around 1,100 documents and withheld 623. This particular action had cost the department in excess of \$14,000 in search and review time.

Mr. Slany explained that the problem that the Office of the Historian foresaw in regard to a time line for declassification was that of a "credible record." Will it be possible in all cases, he asked, to get a credible record out within the time frame? This put the Historical Office in the position of having to "anguish" over deciding to publish with the documents available at the time or waiting in hopes of getting out a fuller record. The important question was how comprehensive did the record have to be to be credible? Setting a time line did not solve this problem. The problem of getting the important documents declassified would still remain.

Mr. May, however, pointed out that the point of having a time line is that it should facilitate declassification decisions.

Mr. Glennon replied that the guidelines for declassification would still have to be very specific. Moreover, there are many problems which CDC cannot address, in particular the question of materials from other agencies. Some State Department documents from the compilation must also be referred to them for clearance. For example, there are 4 volumes of Foreign Relations at the NSC at the present. In his opinion, so long as the Office continues to use other agency material to present a complete historical record, these non-State Department declassification blocks will remain a problem.

Mr. May felt that the question of State Department documents and other agencies' documents were separable questions. Mr. Slany explained that the Office had some anxiety that separating release of documents from the series would reduce the utility of Foreign Relations.

Mr. Glennon noted that in the case of records for the 1950-1954 period, there were instances, (for example Latin America) in which records were available at NARS but not yet through Foreign Relations.

Mr. Slany added that the HO staff was anxious about being able to put together a full record, not just a State Department record. In addition, Foreign Relations was an important "vehicle for public disclosure," and Mr. May agreed with this proposition.

Mr. Rosecrance observed that the State Department should play a leading role in releasing documents. It was the agency most concerned with the foreign affairs record. It had control over its own documents, so it might be possible to go with State Department records alone on a time line. If DOD and other agencies refused to go along, the publication of State Department records might have a "salutary influence" in stimulating them to release their records as well. Ambassador Burke was skeptical that this would actually pressure other agencies, since there was no precedent in other agencies for documentary publication, but only for official histories.

Mr. Gaddis expressed his concern that Foreign Relations not lose its "breadth." Mr. May repeated his observation that the problem of Foreign Relations should be separated from the question of the release of documents.

Mr. Gaddis agreed that the key objective was to facilitate the release of records. He felt that another way to accomplish this would be to set limits on the time other agencies had to review documents State wanted to release. If they failed to meet the deadline, the documents should be published. Ambassador Burke pointed out that in "practical bureaucratic terms" the State Department had no way to force NSC, CIA or DOD to cooperate. They were our peers, and would not accept taskings from State on this matter. He also expressed concern over publishing State Department documents only. As matters stood, the other agencies had no obligation to publish anything. The Defense Department, he believed, would merely continue with its "in-house" histories. The other departments did not have a traditional commitment to release documentary collections. Ambassador Burke expressed his strong conviction that documentary collections were much more valuable to scholars than such publications as DOD's in-house histories. Mr. Slany noted, in this regard, that other agencies' declassification efforts were geared to the State Department effort and were, in a sense, dependent on it.

Ambassador Burke concluded that we were "stuck" with the present format. The fact that the NSC role had increased so dramatically in importance from the 1950's on, for example, means that the release of State Department records by themselves offered only an incomplete picture of foreign policy making.

Mr. May then asked if the problem of getting documents out was getting greater over time as the number of documents and countries was increasing. Ambassador Burke noted that while the number of countries did increase greatly from 1960 on, not all countries were equally important. Mr. May continued by observing that one function of A/CDC was to assure that country desks were comfortable with the release of the documents. The simple fact that there were more countries after 1960 seemed to him to indicate an increase in CDC's work load. Ambassador Burke, however, explained that the A/CDC reviewers were very persuasive with the desk officers. Often they had more experience with the countries in question than the desk officers. In the final analysis the reviewers themselves determined what they released. Therefore, he felt that the problem of the proliferation of countries was a "manageable burden."

Mr. Hamilton noted that as far as the NARS project was concerned, the desks and bureaus were not involved. They had seen the guidelines, but documents were not necessarily referred to bureaus. In fact, very few went to the bureaus. In response to a question by Mr. Rosecrance, Mr. Hamilton confirmed that the bureaus therefore did not have a "veto" over the release of documents for accessioning at NARS.

In regard to work load, Mr. Hamilton observed that the real problem was not so much the increase in the number of countries as the great increase in communications capacity. There were more foreign affairs documents on more subjects; more "paper" in general. Who was to decide which documents were worth keeping? He had no doubt that many documents were an encumbrance and that it was a poor use of resources to review and store them. But historians understandably do not want to delegate the authority to identify and dispose of them. Mr. May noted that the operational result was the same--it was getting more difficult to deal with the increasing volume of documents.

Ambassador Burke suggested that the obvious solution was "to put more men on the job." He would like to find more efficient means to deal with the problem. A/CDC, he noted, had discussed the problem with FAIM, and is awaiting recommendations. A possible solution might be to link NARS with A/CDC via a computer link. As documents are reviewed and released they could become available in digital form at NARS. Recent documents were of course already in digital form.

Mr. May indicated that he appreciated the validity of Ambassador Burke's interest in a data-link for digital records, but that his present concern is with the paper record for the 1950's and 1960's. Mr. Slany explained that the problem is a managerial compromise based on limited resources. He constantly must juggle conflicting tasks and priorities. These choices expose the Office to the criticism of failing to provide a complete record. He perceives Ambassador Burke's concern to represent the fact that he also knows his resources must be divided between preservation and current release.

Mr. Holsti asked whether a time line for release would free resources in both offices to devote to the problems just elucidated. Mr. Slany responded that it would change the agenda for the offices, but he questioned whether the Historical Office staff or the Committee could accept the categories of exemption and their impact upon the comprehensiveness of the official record. He also noted that the recent history of changes in Executives Orders was not auspicious.

Mr. Rubin suggested that the Department consider adopting a process under which everything would be released after 30 years unless specific steps were taken in specific instances to withhold documents. In other words, to reverse the priority of the existing system. Under this new system, affirmative action would be required to keep documents classified rather than to release documents as under the existing system. Paraphrasing Mr. Johnson, he said that he felt that the process of deciding which documents to keep classified would "focus the mind" of the classifiers.

Ambassador Burke pointed out that the FOIA process worked that way. The Department has to defend its decision to withhold a document under FOIA. This focuses the attention of the reviewer and results in more documents being released. He suggested that something along the line of Mr. Rubin's idea might work in conjunction with the 25-year line being proposed by Senator Mathias. On the other hand, it would only work with a small number of documents since it would require senior people to review the documents.

Mr. May asked how hard it was to identify sensitive documents? Ambassador Burke replied that it was amazing to him how much was released under Presidential library referrals. The problem, in fact, was how to make these documents available to all scholars on a systematic basis.

Other Matters

Ms. Gruber asked what percentage of the studies in the policy-related research program of the Historical Office were classified?

Ms. Noring explained that answering in terms of the percentage of reports would be deceiving. While the list of classified studies was only one-third as long as the list of unclassified studies, the story in terms of resources devoted to the studies was quite different. In terms of resources, the split was somewhere around 60 percent for unclassified and 40 percent for classified, and could be as high as 50-50. Many of the classified projects were such things as negotiating histories which, by their nature, took more time.

Committee's Private Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The Committee met privately to prepare its report.