

20 Years of Opening Governments

1985: National Security Archive becomes a formal non-governmental, non-profit organization in July as a project of The Fund for Peace Inc., a tax-exempt charity, and subsequently moves into office space at the Brookings Institution Annex, 1755 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Suite 500, Washington D.C.

May 1987: Archive's first major publication, *The Chronology*, a 678-page paperback, hits the streets on eve of congressional Iran-Contra hearings. Bob Woodward calls the book "the most comprehensive, authoritative, objective and useful summary of the Iran-Contra affair available."

March 1987: Archive provides core documents for Hawk's Cay conference bringing together JFK's Cuban missile crisis ExComm members in the first of a series of groundbreaking critical oral history events.

May 1990: Archive lawsuit (with Public Citizen) wins release of Oliver North's notebooks on Iran-Contra, which record President George H.W. Bush in every major decision meeting.

1986: U.S. Justice Department sets up a hotline to coordinate agency responses to Archive FOIA requests. Treasury Department refuses to waive processing fees on Archive requests, calling the Archive "an unregulated, monopolistic information czar for the entire federal government." Archive softball team becomes the "InfoCzars." *USA Today* reports comments of former CIA director Richard Helms on the Archive: "I can't do anything but applaud this project. Anything that can be done to educate people, all the better." *Washington Journalism Review* hails Archive as a "Nexis of national security" and a "state-of-the-art index to history."

June 1986: Lt. Col. Oliver North takes time out from his efforts to trade arms for hostages with Iranian mullahs and circumvent congressional limits on lethal aid for the Nicaraguan contras, and writes diary entry about his effort to prevent Ford Foundation grant to Archive.

1988: Archive intervention in *Washington Post v. DoD* wins "special master" to review Pentagon secrecy claims about failed 1980 Iran hostage rescue mission; ultimately 75% of denied docs go public.

1988: Archive lawsuit forces CIA to disgorge internal index of released documents, but CIA prints 3-foot-high computer dump in random order - subsequently cited by Congress in passing the 1996 Electronic FOIA amendments.

March 1991: The Supreme Court denies *cert.* On Pentagon's attempt to overturn appeals court ruling that Archive is "representative of the news media" entitled to processing fee waivers. Ruling ends 5-year government effort to stymie Archive FOIAs and opens waivers to freelancers and non-traditional journalists.

1995: Archive co-organizes with leading Japanese daily paper *Yomiuri Shimbun* a major conference on international openness norms at UN University in Tokyo; five years later, Japan enacts access to information law.

1995: World Wide Web revolutionizes Archive publishing; new Web site features secret Nixon-Elvis memos, wins Yahoo! and BBC awards, draws millions of visitors.

1996: Archive fellow Tina Rosenberg wins non-fiction Pulitzer Prize and 1995 National Book Award for analysis of Communism's aftermath in Eastern Europe.

January 1992: Archive lawsuit opens secret JFK-Khrushchev letters from the Cuban missile crisis on eve of historic 30th anniversary conference in Havana. Castro reportedly stays up all night reading the documents and attends entire event, which reveals previously unknown presence of tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba in 1962.

January 1993: Archive co-sponsors landmark Moscow conference opening former Soviet files, organized by Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project, leading Archive partner in excavating "other side" of Cold War.

June 1997: "Missed Opportunities" conference in Hanoi, with Archive co-sponsorship and documents, brings together McNamara and North Vietnamese.

June 1997: Former dictator Jaruzelski and Solidarity's Mazowiecki join Warsaw Pact commander Kulikov and US's Brzezinski for Archive-organized landmark conference on the 1980-1981 Solidarity crisis in Poland.

1999: Archive partners with Swiss and Italian institutes to start Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, innovative network of Eastern and Western scholars.

February 1999: Guatemala truth commission relies on Archive documents and victim testimonies for findings of "genocide" by military and security forces; Archive acquires and later publishes unique death squad dossier with chilling photos of "desaparecidos."

June 1999: US declassifies 20,000 pages (ultimately more than 150,000) on Chile's Pinochet and human rights abuses after campaign led by Archive to support prosecution of former dictator.

April 2000: Long Island University awards prestigious George Polk Award to Archive.

February 2001: After Archive threatens legal action, State Department recovers Kissinger telephone transcripts removed in 1976; National Archives follows suit and overturns 25-year Kissinger effort to control official record; subsequently 33,000 pages become public.

March 2001: Archive convenes 40th anniversary reunion in Havana of Bay of Pigs veterans from Miami, Washington and Cuba; survivors walk beach, lay wreath to dead on both sides, discuss declassified revelations with Castro, CIA and Kennedy officials.

July 2001: Archive's annual summer school program with regional Russian universities begins at Saratov State, moving to Kuban State's Gelendzhik campus on the Black Sea in 2003.

August 2001: Supporting Panama truth commission, the Archive collects, scans 1,000 U.S. documents on human rights violations by Torrijos/Noriega military regimes.

June 2002: Multi-national editorial board launches *freedominfo.org*, virtual network of freedom of information advocates, hosted and staffed by Archive; contributes to new FOIA laws in more than 50 countries.

March 2005: Archive posts CIA file on Eichmann, other Nazis recruited by US after WWII.

September 2005: Archive wins Emmy Award for "outstanding achievement in news and documentary research" for Discovery Times Channel show, "Declassified: Nixon in China."

March 2004: Archive co-sponsors oral history session with Chinese and East European former diplomats in Beijing, and a Cold War history workshop inside a yurt in Ulaanbaatr, Mongolia.

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November 1986: Iran-Contra scandal erupts, exposing covert actions in Middle East and Central America ordered by President Reagan contrary to law and policy. Archive consolidates all Iran and contra primary sources, provides day-by-day chronology database to official investigators; staff become fixtures on network TV and radio news over next 4 years.

July 1988: Archive FOIA lawsuit exposes FBI efforts to recruit librarians to spy on patrons, especially those with "foreign names and accents" - criteria that would have included Zbigniew Brzezinski's use of the Columbia University library.

1989: Archive's first microfiche publication, *El Salvador*, inaugurates the "Making of U.S. Policy" series with Chadwyck-Healey and sets new standard for multiple points of indexing access to previously secret primary-source documents.

January 1989: Archive lawsuit, *Brenner v. State*, produces Operation Mongoose documents just in time for Moscow conference on Cuban missile crisis with Gromyko, Dobrynin, McNamara, and Cuban delegation.

January 1989: Federal judge grants injunction in Archive suit to prevent Reagan White House from destroying backup tapes of e-mail system on night before inauguration of George H.W. Bush. *Armstrong v. Reagan, v. Bush, v. EOP* takes 5 years against 3 presidents to save the White House e-mail.

Fall 1989: Hungarian dissidents visit Archive and begin decade of partnerships to open Communist Party records and enact freedom of information in Eastern Europe.

July 1990: Archive launches sustained declassification effort to open U.S. records on the Berlin Crisis (1958-1962), with support from the multinational Nuclear History Program.

October 1992: The New Press publishes the Archive's first documents reader, on the Cuban missile crisis. Volumes follow on South Africa, Iran-Contra, Kissinger, Pinochet, White House e-mail, winning book awards from *Boston Globe* and *L.A. Times*.

October 1992: Archive provides briefing book for first meeting of "Carter-Brezhnev" critical oral history project featuring former high-level U.S. and Soviet officials, at Rockefeller estate in Pocantico Hills, New York.

April 1994: Václav Havel welcomes participants to Prague for first in series of Archive-organized eyewitness and scholarly conferences on Cold War crises in Eastern Europe.

December 1994: Archive leaves Brookings for new home in Gelman Library, Suite 701, at George Washington University.

September 1996: Archive organizes historic conference in Budapest to mark 40th anniversary of Hungary uprising, partners with 1956 Institute and Academy of Sciences.

1998: Archive shares George Foster Peabody Award for landmark 24-hour TV series *Cold War*, produced by CNN and Jeremy Isaacs Productions, using Archive documents, briefing books, and fact-checking.

May 1998: Musgrove conference on "The End of the Cold War in Europe" features Gorbachev advisers Chernyaev, Shakhnazarov and Tarasenko, as well as US ambassador Mallock and CIA's MacEachin - first in series of conferences in Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary on eve of 10th anniversaries of Communism's collapse.

May 1998: Archive delegation arrives in Tehran to initiate multilateral U.S.-Iran Relations project on crises like 1953 coup and 1979 hostage-taking.

June 2000: Archive co-sponsors Russian Academy of Sciences international symposium in Moscow on "New Cold War History: Theory, Methodology, Historiography."

June 2000: Ground-breaking conference in Tehran on the 1953 Mosaddeq coup includes Archive-organized group of American scholars; first such public discussion in Iran under any regime.

October 1998: On Web and in Mexico's *Proceso* magazine, Archive publishes declassified CIA and State documents on 1968 Tlatelolco massacre by police of protesters in Mexico City, prompting Mexican calls for open government; five years later, Mexico enacts model freedom of information law with Archive expert help.

September 2001: Within days of 9/11, Archive posts Web package of "September 11 Sourcebooks" that wins *National Journal* citation as Top Five Sites on terrorism.

August 2002: State Department under Archive pressure finally releases 4,677 documents on Argentina's dirty war; evidence feeds legal cases in Buenos Aires and FOI campaign.

September 2002: First-ever conviction on human rights abuse charges of Guatemalan military officer, credited by *Economist* magazine to Archive testimony and evidence.

October 2002: Archive organizes 40th anniversary Cuban missile crisis conference in Havana with Castro, McNamara, and others; Russian submarine officer reveals nuclear torpedoes at quarantine line in 1962 with US depth charges exploding.

December 2003: Archive publishes secret memcon of Kissinger's 1976 "green light" to Argentine junta on dirty war that killed 22,000 - "the quicker you succeed the better."

April 2004: Archive posts 1960s, 1980s torture manuals - precedent for Abu Ghraib abuses in Iraq. Archive fellow publishes first systematic critique of intelligence and propaganda on Iraq weapons of mass destruction.

November 2004: Conceptual artist Jenny Holzer projects Archive documents onto Gelman Library as part of international exhibition *Truth before Power*, premiered in Bregenz, Austria in June.

December 2005: Archive celebrates 20th anniversary with GWU event and Bill Moyers keynote.