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CIA Posts More Than 12 Million Pages of CREST Records Online

17 January 2017

LANGLEY, VA – The largest collection of declassified CIA records is now accessible online. The documents were previously only available to the public at the National Archives in Maryland. Approximately 930,000 documents, totaling more than 12 million pages, are now available in the CIA's Electronic Reading Room on CIA's website (https://web.archive.org/web/20170728155004/https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/).

Since 1999, the CIA has regularly released its historical declassified records to the standalone CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) system that was only accessible in person at the National Archives Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, Maryland. Moving these documents online highlights the CIA's commitment to increasing the accessibility of declassified records to the public.

"Access to this historically significant collection is no longer limited by geography. The American public can access these documents from the comfort of their homes," notes Joseph Lambert, the CIA Director of Information Management.

The CREST collection covers a myriad of topics, such as the early CIA history, the Cold War, Vietnam, the Berlin Tunnel project, the Korean War, and the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. The documents also extensively address developments on terrorism, as well as worldwide military and economic issues.

The documents include a wide variety of records, including collections of finished intelligence from the 1940s to the 1990s prepared by the Directorate of Analysis (or its predecessors, such as the Directorate of Intelligence), Directorate of Operations reports from the late 1940s through the early 1960s, Directorate of Science and Technology research and development files, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency policy files and memoranda, National Intelligence Council estimates, National Intelligence Surveys, Office of Strategic Services (OSS) records, Directorate of Support administrative records, and imagery reports from the former National Photographic Interpretation Center (reviewed jointly with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)).

CREST records also include large specialized collections of foreign translations, scientific abstracts, ground photo descriptions, and special collections such as STAR GATE remote viewing program files, Henry Kissinger Library of Congress files, and other miscellaneous CIA records.

The declassification of 25-year-old records is mandated by Executive Order 13526, which requires agencies to review all such records categorized as permanent under the Federal Records Act for declassification. As a result, following CIA's review, documents are regularly added to this collection.

The CIA's Electronic Reading room offers a full-text search capability of CREST records, and the collection can be viewed at www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/crest-25-year-program-archive. (https://web.archive.org/web/20170728155004/https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/crest-25-year-program-archive)

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