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Finding Government Documents

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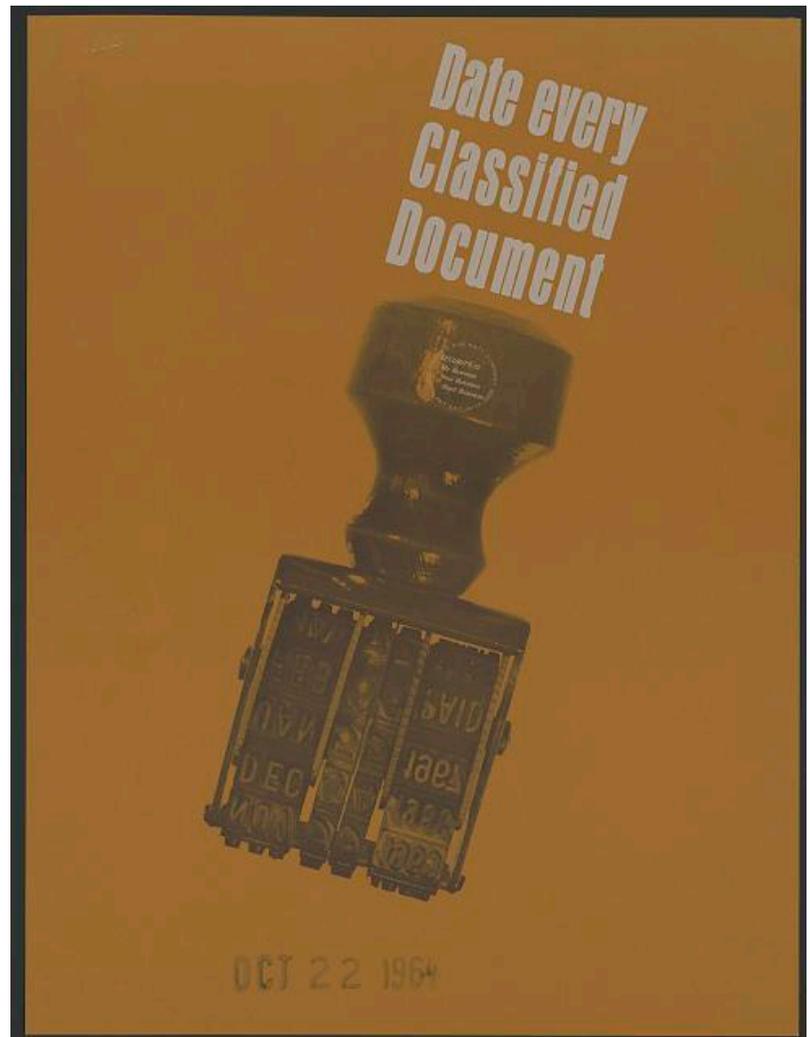
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Declassified Documents

Declassified Documents: Executive Order 13526 of December 29, 2009 [Classified National Security Information] prescribes a uniform system for classifying, safeguarding, and declassifying national security information, including information relating to defense against transnational terrorism.

Learn more about declassified documents by reading *Executive Order 13526*.

Don Ferguson, artist. *Date every classified document, Oct. 22 1964.* Artist Poster Collection. Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Division.

Finding Declassified Documents Online/ Subscription Databases

The subscription resources marked with a padlock 🔒 are available to researchers on-site at the Library of Congress. If you are unable to visit the Library, you may be able to access these resources through your local public or academic library.

- U.S. Declassified Documents Online 🗗   🔒

  ON-SITE ONLY

  Provides full-text access to over 500,000 pages of previously classified government documents. Covering major post-World War II era international events from the Cold War to the Vietnam War and beyond, this source enables users to locate a selection of US government documents from the Central Intelligence Agency, the State Department, the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, the White House, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as many other government agencies. The documents range in size and scope from telegrams, correspondence, and unevaluated field reports, to lengthy background studies and detailed minutes of cabinet-level meetings.
  Coverage: 1950 to present

- Digital National Security Archive 🗗   🔒

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  The Digital National Security Archive (DNSA) contains the most comprehensive set of declassified government documents available. Each of these meticulously indexed collections is compiled by top scholars and experts and exhaustively covers the most critical world events, countries, and U.S. policy decisions from post World War II through the 21st century. These collections offer unparalleled access to the defining international strategies of our time. Glossaries, chronologies, bibliographies, overviews, and photographs are included.
  Coverage: 1945 to present

Free Resources for Finding Declassified Documents

- CIA: Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room

  FREE ACCESS

  The FOIA Electronic Reading Room is provided as a public service by the
  Office of the Chief Information Officer's Information Management Services.
  Here you can view documents released through the FOIA and other CIA
  release programs.
  Coverage: varies

- Department of State: Freedom of Information Act

  FREE ACCESS

  The Department of State administers information access programs including
  the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and the Mandatory
  Declassification Review programs. This website provides a wealth of
  information about the Department's FOIA program and how to obtain access
  to the Department's records, as well as a search tool containing 221,373
  searchable documents reviewed and released to the public.
  Coverage: varies

- FBI Records: The Vault - FOIA Library

  FREE ACCESS

  "The Vault is our [FBI] new FOIA Library, containing 6,700 documents and
  other media that have been scanned from paper into digital copies so you
  can read them in the comfort of your home or office. Included here are many
  new FBI files that have been released to the public but never added to this
  website; dozens of records previously posted on our site but removed as
  requests diminished; files from our previous FOIA Library, and new,
  previously unreleased files."
  Coverage: varies

- Federation of American Scientists: Project on Government Secrecy ⤢

  FREE ACCESS

  "Through research, advocacy, and public education, the FAS Project on
  Government Secrecy works to challenge excessive government secrecy and
  to promote public oversight." (from the FAS website)
  Coverage: varies

Subjects: Government, Political Science

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