

ABOUT: The National Security Archive

The National Security Archive

Founded in 1985 by journalists and scholars to check rising Cold War government secrecy, the independent National Security Archive (www.nsarchive.org) has evolved into the U.S. outpost of a global freedom of information movement (www.freedominfo.org). Archive staff and fellows have won some of journalism's most prized awards – Pulitzer and Emmy among them – and regularly make front-page news with previously secret revelations ranging from the CIA's "Family Jewels" to the POLO STEP invasion plan for Iraq. The April 2000 George Polk Award cited the Archive for "*piercing self-serving veils of government secrecy, guiding journalists in search for the truth and informing us all.*"

The Archive combines a unique range of functions: investigative journalism center, research institute on international affairs, library and archive of what the *Los Angeles Times* called "the world's largest nongovernmental collection" of declassified documents, leading non-profit user of the U.S. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), public interest law firm defending and expanding public access to government information, and indexer and publisher of former government secrets.

The Archive is a partner to research institutes, academies of science, universities, human rights and media organizations in more than 40 countries working to open government files and enrich scholarship and journalism with primary sources. In 2002 *The Economist* credited the Archive's declassified documents and expert testimony with the first-ever conviction of a ranking military officer on human rights abuse charges in Guatemala. The Archive's successful lawsuits have forced the declassification of documents ranging from the Kennedy-Khrushchev letters during the Cuban Missile Crisis to the previously censored photographs of homecoming ceremonies with flag-draped caskets for U.S. casualties of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Landmark litigation by the Archive saved 40 million White House e-mail messages from the Reagan, Bush I and Clinton presidencies, and currently protects under court order some 65,000 computer backup tapes containing e-mail from the George W. Bush White House.

Based at George Washington University's Gelman Library, the Archive relies for its budget on publication revenues and grants from foundations and individuals, and receives no government funding. In fact, the Archive has made 36,000 targeted Freedom of Information and declassification requests to more than 200 offices and agencies of the U.S. government, that have opened more than 7 million pages of previously secret U.S. government documents. Many of these documents are available at the Archive website, www.nsarchive.org, which has been recognized by *Forbes Magazine* as "best of the Web 2005" and by the University of Wisconsin Internet Scout Report for providing "valuable and authoritative educational resources online."