

submitted, the Agency will not accrue or charge fees in excess of our estimate without the specific permission of the requester. Effective October 2, 1997, the ten (10) day provision is modified to twenty (20) days pursuant to the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996.

## CIA ACTION ON FOIA REQUESTS

**§ 1900.21 Processing of requests for records.**

(a) *In general.* Requests meeting the requirements of §§ 1900.11 through 1900.13 shall be accepted as formal requests and processed under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, and these regulations. Upon receipt, the Agency shall within ten (10) days record each request, acknowledge receipt to the requester in writing, and thereafter effect the necessary taskings to the CIA components reasonably believed to hold responsive records. Effective October 2, 1997, the ten (10) day provision is modified to twenty (20) days pursuant to the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996.

(b) *Database of "officially released information."* As an alternative to extensive tasking and as an accommodation to many requesters, the Agency maintains a database of "officially released information" which contains copies of documents released by this Agency. Searches of this database, containing currently in excess of 500,000 pages, can be accomplished expeditiously. Moreover, requests that are specific and well-focused will often incur minimal, if any, costs. Requesters interested in this means of access should so indicate in their correspondence. Effective November 1, 1997 and consistent with the mandate of the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996, on-the-public. Detailed information regarding such access will line electronic access to these records will be available to be available at that time from the point of contact specified in § 1900.03.

(c) *Effect of certain exemptions.* In processing a request, the Agency shall decline to confirm or deny the existence or nonexistence of any responsive records whenever the fact of their ex-

istence or nonexistence is itself classified under Executive Order 12958 or revealing of intelligence sources and methods protected pursuant to section 103(c)(5) of the National Security Act of 1947. In such circumstances, the Agency, in the form of a final written response, shall so inform the requester and advise of his or her right to an administrative appeal.

(d) *Time for response.* The Agency will utilize every effort to determine within the statutory guideline of ten (10) days after receipt of an initial request whether to comply with such a request. However, the current volume of requests require that the Agency seek additional time from a requester pursuant to 32 CFR 1900.33. In such event, the Agency will inform the requester in writing and further advise of his or her right to file an administrative appeal of any adverse determination. Effective October 2, 1997, the ten (10) day provision is modified to twenty (20) days pursuant to the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996.

**§ 1900.22 Action and determination(s) by originator(s) or any interested party.**

(a) *Initial action for access.* CIA components tasked pursuant to a FOIA request shall search all relevant record systems within their cognizance which have not been excepted from search by the provisions of the CIA Information Act of 1984. They shall:

(1) Determine whether a record exists;

(2) Determine whether and to what extent any FOIA exemptions apply;

(3) Approve the disclosure of all non-exempt records or portions of records for which they are the originator; and

(4) Forward to the Coordinator all records approved for release or necessary for coordination with or referral to another originator or interested party. In making these decisions, the CIA component officers shall be guided by the applicable law as well as the procedures specified at 32 CFR 1900.31 and 32 CFR 1900.32 regarding confidential commercial information and personal information (about persons other than the requester).

(b) *Referrals and coordinations.* As applicable and within ten (10) days of receipt by the Coordinator, any CIA records containing information originated by other CIA components shall be forwarded to those entities for action in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section and return. Records originated by other federal agencies or CIA records containing other federal agency information shall be forwarded to such agencies within ten (10) days of our completion of initial action in the case for action under their regulations and direct response to the requester (for other agency records) or return to the CIA (for CIA records). Effective October 2, 1997, the ten (10) day provision is modified to twenty (20) days pursuant to the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments of 1996.

**§ 1900.23 Payment of fees, notification of decision, and right of appeal.**

(a) *Fees in general.* Fees collected under this part do not accrue to the Central Intelligence Agency and shall be deposited immediately to the general account of the United States Treasury.

(b) *Notification of decision.* Upon completion of all required review and the receipt of accrued fees (or promise to pay such fees), the Agency will promptly inform the requester in writing of those records or portions of records which may be released and which must be denied. With respect to the former, the Agency will provide copies; with respect to the latter, the Agency shall explain the reasons for the denial, identify the person(s) responsible for such decisions by name and title, and give notice of a right of administrative appeal.

(c) *Availability of reading room.* As an alternative to receiving records by mail, a requester may arrange to inspect the records deemed releasable at a CIA "reading room" in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. Access will be granted after applicable and accrued fees have been paid. Requests to review or browse documents in our database of "officially released records" will also be honored in this manner to the extent that paper copies or electronic copies in unclassified computer systems exist. All such re-

quests shall be in writing and addressed pursuant to 32 CFR 1900.03. The records will be available at such times as mutually agreed but not less than three (3) days from our receipt of a request. The requester will be responsible for reproduction charges for any copies of records desired.

ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

**§ 1900.31 Procedures for business information.**

(a) *In general.* Business information obtained by the Central Intelligence Agency by a submitter shall not be disclosed pursuant to a Freedom of Information Act request except in accordance with this section. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) *Business information* means commercial or financial information in which a legal entity has a recognized property interest;

(2) *Confidential commercial information* means such business information provided to the United States Government by a submitter which is reasonably believed to contain information exempt from release under exemption (b)(4) of the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, because disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm;

(3) *Submitter* means any person or entity who provides confidential commercial information to the United States Government; it includes, but is not limited to, corporations, businesses (however organized), state governments, and foreign governments; and

(b) *Designation of confidential commercial information.* A submitter of business information will use good-faith efforts to designate, by appropriate markings, either at the time of submission or at a reasonable time thereafter, any portions of its submission that it considers to be confidential commercial information and hence protected from required disclosure pursuant to exemption (b)(4). Such designations shall expire ten (10) years after the date of the submission unless the submitter requests, and provides justification for, a longer designation period.

(c) *Process in event of FOIA request—*  
(1) *Notice to submitters.* The Agency