

Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Group

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**U.S. Congress Extends Effort to Open Secret WWII War Crimes Records
*Two More Years to Declassify and Open CIA Documents***

College Park, MD. . . The effort of the interagency working group tasked with identifying and declassifying records relating to Nazi and Japanese Imperial Government war crimes has been extended to enable it to complete the work of opening CIA records. On March 25, President George W. Bush signed into law legislation that pushes back the group's sunset date to March 2007.

The Interagency Working Group (IWG) originated with the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act of 1998 (PL 105-246), which tasked it to locate, identify, inventory, and recommend for declassification classified U.S. records relating to Nazi and Japanese Imperial Government war crimes. The group consists of high-level representatives from federal agencies and public members, including Elizabeth Holtzman, former Congresswoman from New York; Thomas Baer, head of Steinhardt Baer Pictures Company; and Richard Ben-Veniste, a partner at Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw.

Steven Garfinkel, Chair of the IWG, said, "The IWG has had tremendous success in declassifying records of permanent historical value. Because of our efforts, the entirety of the operational files of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), totaling 1.2 million pages and roughly 7 million additional pages of government records have been declassified. These accomplishments could only be realized with the unwavering commitment of our champions in the U.S. House and Senate, led by Senator Mike DeWine, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, and Senator Dianne Feinstein. We thank them for their many efforts to elicit the full cooperation of the CIA and for providing the IWG with the addition time it needs to complete the job."

"This is great news," said Elizabeth Holtzman. "We are grateful to Congress for extending our time so we could finish the important work of ensuring that all documents related to Nazi war criminals are made public as required by the law."

Richard Ben-Veniste said, "It is unfortunate that delays in obtaining critical information have prevented the IWG from completing its work within the time period contemplated by the legislation under which it was created. However, Congress and the President have acted responsibly in extending the IWG's mandate so that its important work can be concluded." He added, "The CIA has now pledged to cooperate fully with the IWG."

"Thanks to Congress and President Bush, we now have the time to disclose what the Central Intelligence Agency has withheld," said Thomas Baer. "Too much has been secret for too long. Let's find out what CIA's long-classified war crimes documents will show." **(MORE)**

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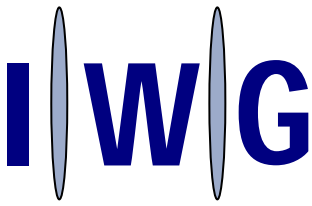
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Nazi War Crimes Records Interagency Working Group Extended

Since 1999, the IWG has declassified and opened to the public an estimated 8 million pages of documents, including 1.2 million pages of OSS records; 50,000 pages of CIA name and subject files; more than 350,000 pages of FBI subject files; and nearly 300,000 pages of Army intelligence files. The once secret records are helping to shape our understanding of the Holocaust, war crimes, and World War II and postwar activities of U.S. and Allied intelligence agencies. The IWG has issued two reports to Congress (in October 1999 and March 2002), and it issues news releases and occasional newsletters. *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*, a 15-chapter book prepared by the IWG team of historians, was published in April 2004 and is available through the National Archives Trust Fund (1-866-272-6272), *Amazon.com*, and soon through Cambridge University Press. The IWG website is <http://www.archives.gov/iwg/>.

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