The staff of the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., has created numerous event-centered sub-collections, each illuminating a particular facet of U.S. foreign policy or intelligence. Used individually, they offer specialized insights; together, they allow you to explore policy across several different areas at once. In addition to declassified documents, each topical collection includes an introductory essay; exhaustive indexing for easy access; and supplementary aids including introductory essays, bibliographies, glossaries, chronologies, and a printed guide to help users put the documents in their historical context. More topical collections are added periodically.
Afghanistan: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1973–1990  This topical collection contains all 15,000 pages from more than 2,500 documents, providing a comprehensive record of the bloodiest and costliest superpower proxy war of the 1980s. Documents include State Department cables from Kabul, Washington, and Islamabad.

424 Fiche

The Berlin Crisis, 1958–1962  Beginning with documents from late 1953, when the Eisenhower administration began formulating its Berlin contingency plans, and closing with a series of newly declassified State Department histories from the late 1960s, “The Berlin Crisis” presents more than 11,500 pages from nearly 3,000 documents.

460 Fiche

China and the United States: From Hostility to Engagement, 1960–1998  Users will find more than 2,000 documents, both unclassified and newly declassified, that detail four decades in the formation and implementation of U.S. policy toward the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan. The collection includes feasibility reports on destroying Chinese nuclear facilities; transcripts of Nixon’s historic meeting with Mao; secret reports on the Tiananmen Square incident; and CIA and DIA biographies of Chinese leaders.

374 Fiche

The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962  Arguably the most critical and dangerous confrontation of the Cold War, the Cuban missile crisis is chronicled through more than 15,000 pages of rarely seen documents from the highest levels of government. Topics include the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs, the U.S. secret war against Castro, the first intelligence reports pointing to the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba, and the highly classified correspondence between Kennedy and Khrushchev.

586 Fiche

Death Squads, Guerrilla Wars, Covert Operations, and Genocide: Guatemala and the United States, 1954–1999  The Guatemalan military kept detailed records of its death squad operations. The death squad logbook reveals the fate of scores of Guatemalan citizens who were “disappeared” by security forces during the mid-1980s. Replete with photos of 183 victims and coded references to their executions, the document was smuggled out of the Guatemalan army’s intelligence files and provided to human rights advocates just two days before a UN-sponsored truth commission released its report, which is in the collection. The collection contains more than 2,000 primary documents, including papers from the CIA, State Department, Defense Department, AID, National Security Council, U.S. embassy in Guatemala, White House, and other government sources.

388 Fiche

El Salvador I: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1977–1984  Users will find more than 27,000 pages of documents covering one of the most hotly debated subjects of the 1990s—the U.S. role in the civil war in El Salvador, including intelligence gathering and policy-making. The collection also includes extensive reporting on human rights abuses.

870 Fiche


220 Fiche

Iran: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1977–1980  More than 14,000 pages of documents are offered in this collection, which illuminates the fall of the Shah and the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini. It includes some documents (obtained by the staff of the National Security Archive through aggressive use of the Freedom of Information Act) that otherwise would not have been released until the middle of the 21st century.

565 Fiche

664 Fiche

Iraqgate: Saddam Hussein, U.S. Policy and the Prelude to the Persian Gulf War, 1980–1994. The 1,900 documents here trace U.S. policy toward Iraq before the Persian Gulf War, as well as government reactions to revelations about the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) scandal and the secret arming of Saddam’s regime. The documents come from virtually every U.S. federal agency involved in U.S.-Iraq policy and the BNL affair.

331 Fiche


316 Fiche

Nicaragua: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1978–1990. Users will find more than 3,000 documents, including many recently declassified State Department cables obtained through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit. Key events range from the outbreak of widespread opposition to the Somoza family dynasty, through the Contra war of the 1980s, and on to the election of 1990 that ended the Sandinista government.

579 Fiche

The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965–1986. A case study of U.S. policy toward a Third World ally, this collection documents the often conflicting interests that arose between Philippines president Ferdinand Marcos and the U.S. Among the events covered are the assassination of opposition leader Benigno Aquino, Jr.; the rise of Communist and Muslim insurgencies during the 70s and 80s; the emergence of a small but vocal opposition movement in the U.S.; and Marcos’ fall in 1986.

652 Fiche

Presidential Directives on National Security, Part I: From Truman to Clinton. This unique collection documents virtually every aspect of U.S. national security policy from the Marshall Plan to the Iran-Contra affair. These 2,100 declassified documents include Truman’s and Eisenhower’s National Security Council policy papers, Kennedy’s and Johnson’s action memoranda; and Nixon’s, Ford’s, Carter’s, Bush’s, and Clinton’s decision and study memoranda.

411 Fiche

Presidential Directives on National Security, Part II: From Harry Truman to George W. Bush. This collection is a follow-up to Presidential Directives on National Security from Truman to Clinton, published in 1994. As with the first volume, this collection consists of the highest-level documents issued by modern U.S. presidents pertaining to all elements of U.S. national security policy, foreign policy, defense policy, intelligence, and international economic policy, as well as organizational structure and initiatives. The publication of Part II has been made possible by the declassification since 1994 of a substantial number of previously unavailable records. The collection consists of 1,836 documents, totaling 23,612 pages, and covering all administrations from Truman to George W. Bush.

458 Fiche
“These documents provide unprecedented insight into the making of American foreign policy that only the Pentagon Papers have done before. They are a must for every journalist and academic who seeks to understand the inside story of foreign policy.”  

Raymond Bonner, Former Correspondent in El Salvador, New York Times
South Africa: The Making of U.S. Policy, 1962–1989  This collection provides more than 2,500 primary source documents describing U.S. relationships to apartheid, including implementation, enforcement, and violations of the U.N.-sponsored sanctions against South Africa. The collection spans the period from the arrest of Nelson Mandela to his release.

439 Fiche

The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Analysis of the Soviet Union, 1947–1991  For nearly half a century the U.S.S.R., with its substantial military forces, represented the primary security concern of the U.S. and the most important single target for U.S. intelligence gathering. This unique collection unites the highest-level U.S. intelligence assessments in a single resource, exhaustively indexed for easy research access. Its 600 classified intelligence estimates and reports total nearly 14,000 pages.

190 Fiche

Terrorism and U.S. Policy, 1968–2002  Beginning with the 1968 hijacking of an El Al jet to Algiers, the first politically motivated hijacking and hostage-taking episode of its kind, this set provides coverage of dozens of incidents of international terrorism, with special attention to those targeting Americans or U.S. interests. While the documents treat events from all over the world, the Middle East and Southwest Asia receive particular emphasis because of the special importance of that region for understanding this subject, particularly after September 11, 2001. One highlight is the material won through the lawsuit filed by former AP reporter and hostage Terry A. Anderson. It includes highly sensitive reports from U.S. military and other intelligence elements that give important insights into the scope and depth of intelligence reporting and analysis about terrorism in the 1980s. Another feature is a complete set of the declassified records of meetings of the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism, one of the most important decision-making bodies on terrorism under Nixon and Ford.

409 Fiche

U.S. Espionage and Intelligence: Organization, Operations, and Management, 1947–1996  The 1,180 documents gathered here shed light on the organization of U.S. intelligence services and their activities during the Cold War, and describe the later consolidation and reevaluation of the intelligence community in the post-Cold War era. Items of interest include a report on plots to assassinate Fidel Castro; a secret biographical sketch of Director of Intelligence Allen W. Dulles; a plan for restructuring defense intelligence following the collapse of the Soviet Union; and an assessment of the damage done by spy Aldrich Ames.

490 Fiche

The U.S. Intelligence Community: Organization, Operations and Management, 1947–1989  Previously inaccessible documents—organizational and functional manuals, unit histories, and internal directives—provide researchers with the most comprehensive structural portrait of the U.S. espionage establishment ever published. The 1,180 documents here shed light on intelligence organization and activities during the Cold War, as well as the consolidation and reevaluation of the intelligence community following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

266 Fiche

U.S. Military Uses of Space, 1945–1991  Historically among the most highly classified government materials, the 700 documents in this collection show the evolution of a variety of U.S. space programs. Users will find previously classified histories, program management directives, and requirements studies, ranging from a 1951 report on using satellites for reconnaissance to a 1990 briefing paper on air support for Operation Desert Shield.

239 Fiche

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U.S. Nuclear History: Nuclear Arms and Politics in the Missile Age, 1955–1968 This collection marks the first comprehensive publication of significant declassified U.S. government documents on the development of America’s nuclear weapons policy during one of the Cold War’s most volatile periods. The more than 1,400 documents here, representing over 20,000 pages of material, come from U.S. government sources such as the State Department, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Strategic Air Command.

358 Fiche

U.S. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Policy, 1945–1991 Spanning the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki through the recent IAEA inspections of Iraq’s nuclear program, “U.S. Nuclear Non-Proliferation” offers researchers the most complete set of primary source materials on U.S. non-proliferation policy available.

448 Fiche

U.S. Policy in the Vietnam War, Part I: 1954–1968 This collection documents the deadliest conflict in modern U.S. history prior to the current war against terrorism. The goal was to assemble both classic and relatively well-known documentary sources as well as the most recent declassified materials, making a single comprehensive resource for primary substantive research on the Vietnam conflict. The set consists primarily of documents from the White House, National Security Council, State Department, Defense Department, and other federal agencies involved in policy-making on the war in Southeast Asia. It also features reporting from the field and analysis from the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, American embassies overseas, U.S. regional military commands, especially the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), and the military services. Also included are government documents from South Vietnam, North Vietnam, the Soviet Union, China, the UK, and other foreign sources.

427 Fiche

U.S. Policy in the Vietnam War, Part II: 1969–1975 In general this collection presents the first major selection of primary source documents from the Nixon and Ford administrations, with subsets including Pacification/Phoenix; Action Against North Vietnam II; Vietnamization and the Nixon Strategy; Cambodia; Negotiations 1969-1972; Climax, Breakdown, and Final Negotiations; the Christmas Bombing; Fall of South Vietnam; Aftermath; Intelligence; and a General subset related to the Pentagon Papers and the volumes of the Joint Chiefs of Staff history of the Vietnam War that cover the years 1969 to 1975.

405 Fiche

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