In April 2012, I filed a request with the CIA under the Freedom of Information Act for eighteen documents, most of which had to do with the issue of how U.S. intelligence felt about how the war in South Vietnam was going and what the president was told about the war there. A copy of that request letter follows. I was eventually told I could expect a response by May 2013. When no response was received at that point, I asked again when the request would be processed and I was given an updated completion date of March 28, 2014.

If and when I do receive copies of those documents, I’ll post them on my website, linked to the descriptions in the letter that follows.

My April 11, 2012, FOIA request (F-2012-01096):

April 5, 2012

Information and Privacy Coordinator Central Intelligence Agency Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Coordinator:

Under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. subsection 552, I am requesting copies of 18 documents which I will describe in this letter.

The first batch are cited in the CIA history *CIA and the House of Ngo* (<http://www.foia.cia.gov/vietnam/2_CIA_AND_THE_HOUSE_OF_NGO.pdf>), declassified February 2009. If that link does not work, this can be found on the CIA FOIA website ([http://www.foia.cia.gov](http://www.foia.cia.gov/)), tab for “special collections,” subtab for “Vietnam Histories.” (The page and footnote number in that history are given at the end of each citation). The source for three of these documents has been sanitized out of the online version of this history, but you can find it easily enough by looking at the classified version. Or you might want to go directly to the collection of McCone memoranda noted for item 10 below, and you’ll probably find them in that box.

1. John A. McCone, Memorandum for the Record. "Discussion-Secretary Rusk's conference room-Tuesday evening-6:00 p.m.-16 September 1963" 18 September

1963 (p. 188 n. 10)

2. Walter Elder, "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence," revised 1973 version, History Staff Job 8701032R, Box 4 (p. 188 n. 11)

3. Mary S. McAuliffe. "John A. McCone as Director of Central Intelligence, 1961-

1965," draft manuscript, History Staff, 1994 (p. 188 n. 11) (same source as for item 2)

4. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, “Meeting with the President, McNamara, Attorney General, Bundy, myself, concerning South Viet Nam, 25

October 1963 (p. 202 n. 5)

5. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, “Notes on Meeting at 4:00, Cabinet

Room, re South Viet Nam,” 29 October 1963 (p. 205 n. 14)

The second batch of documents I am requesting were cited in certain footnotes in a monograph produced by CIA’s Center for the Study of Intelligence called *CIA and the Vietnam Policymakers: Three Episodes 1962-1968* ([https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi- publications/books-and-monographs/cia-and-the-vietnam-policymakers-three-episodes-1962-](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/cia-and-the-vietnam-policymakers-three-episodes-1962-1968/index.html)

[1968/index.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/cia-and-the-vietnam-policymakers-three-episodes-1962-1968/index.html)), posted 2007.

From first episode (no page numbers given in text, but relevant footnote is given in parentheses at the end of each citation):

6. McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Meeting with the President, 10

September 1963" (n. 3) (this is probably in the same box as the document in item 10 below)

7. CIA Inspector General's report, November 1964 (*TS*). CIA files, Job No. 73-B-

567, DCI - Inspector General, Box 2, "Surveys," document 185214 (n. 3)

8. William Colby, Memorandum for the Record, "Secretary of Defense Conference on Vietnam, 8 May 1963." (S) CIA/DDP files, Job No. 78-597, DDO/ISS, Box 1, Folder 8. (n. 13)

9. Richard Helms, Memorandum for the Record, "Director's Meeting with the Secretary of Defense," 18 June 1962 (S). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, "DCI/McCone," Folder 2 (n. 15)

From the second episode:

10. McCone, Memorandum for the Record of Lunch with Rusk (at McCone's home), 3 September l963, (S/Eyes Only). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 2: "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July -

26 November 1963." (n. 20)

11. McCone, Memorandum for the Record, 5 September l963 (S). CIA/DCI files as above. (n. 21)

12. In McCone, letter to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., l9 September l963 (S). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B1285A, Box 8. (n. 22)

13. Marshall Carter 1967 memorandum, CIA/IG files, Job No 74B779, Inspector General, Box 1, "Special Studies, 1964-1972," Folder: "Chronology on Vietnam, November 1964." (n. 29)

14. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with Secretary Rusk

at Lunch at DCI Residence This Date," 3 September l963. (S/Eyes Only) CIA/DCI

files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos

for the Record, 23 July - 26 November 63." (n. 34)

15. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Luncheon Meeting with Mr. Reston of *The New York Times*-DCI Residence-26 September l963." (S/Eyes Only). CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, "DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July-26 November '63." (n. 39)

16. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, "Discussion with the President-- October 21" (S). CIA History Staff files. (n. 44)

17. John McCone, Memorandum for the Record, “Discussion with Governor Averell Harriman at Lunch, October 30th,” 3l October l963. (S/Eyes Only) CIA/DCI files, Job No. 80B01285A, DCI/McCone, Box 2, Folder 8, “DCI (McCone) Memos for the Record, 23 July-26 November ‘63.” (n. 48)

Finally, I would like to see one document that has already been declassified (according to the online search engine for the CREST collection), but which has as yet not been posted in pdf format in the “Best of CREST” collection:

18. THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF NGO DINH [DIEM]

**ESDN**: CIA-RDP75-00001R000200410080-3

**Collection**: 2000 CREST Documents - General CIA Records.txt

I should note that (a) a number of these documents are records of meetings for which other records have already been declassified; and (b) that I checked both your Electronic Reading Room and the CREST search engine, and I couldn’t find copies of these documents in either of those locations.

In order to help you determine what sort of fee I would have to pay, you should know that I am a professional historian, currently working as a Professor of Political Science at the University of California at Los Angeles. I was also on the CIA’s Historical Review Panel for a while. I am currently working on a study of U.S. policy on Vietnam during the late Kennedy period. Since I believe disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in my commercial interest, I request a waiver of all fees for this request. If, however, you decide to charge me any fees for searching for, reviewing, or copying the records, please notify me before processing if the amount exceeds $200.

As the FOIA requires, please release all reasonably segregable nonexempt portions of documents. If you deny all or any part of this request, please cite each specific exemption you think justifies your refusal to release the information and notify me of appeal procedures available under the law.

If you have any questions about handling this request, you may telephone me at my office phone

(310) 267-1904.

I would greatly appreciate it if you could possibly provide me with this material within the next three months.

Sincerely,

Marc Trachtenberg

Professor of Political Science