

Washington Insider

National Archives and Records Administration to Release the Pentagon Papers

On May 26, David S. Ferriero, the Archivist of the United States, announced that the Pentagon Papers have been declassified and will be released in their entirety in hard copy and online in digital format on June 16—except for eleven words that will remain classified.

The “Pentagon Papers” are the popular name for a study of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam over a 20-year period that was commissioned by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in 1967. Copies of the report were made by a former Department of Defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg. The top-secret documents were eventually leaked to the *New York Times*, which published the first excerpts in June 1971. Other media outlets subsequently released parts of the report.

According to the blog of the National Declassification Center (NDC), “no one, outside the people properly cleared to view Top Secret, has seen the real Pentagon Papers.” The NDC states that the upcoming release “will present the American public with the first real look at this historic document.”

The Archivist also reported that the NDC has now achieved the capacity to process 14 million pages of classified records per month for declassification, and has declassified over 169 million pages of records over the past year. Ferriero added that the NDC is declassifying 91% of the material that it is processing.

Coburn Attacks NSF: Calls for Elimination of the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), who in 2009 unsuccessfully tried to eliminate the political science program at the NSF, has issued a report entitled *The National Science Foundation: Under the Microscope* that accuses NSF of mismanagement and wasteful spending and calls for the elimination of NSF’s Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) directorate.

The senator gives NSF credit for transformative research that led to the Internet, cloud computing, bar codes, and magnetic resonance imaging, but declares many individual grants “questionable studies,” including several investigations of democratization and democratic processes. The report also categorizes the American National Election Studies and the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, both of which have tracked Americans’ political, economic, and social behavior during the past 60 years, as wasteful.

Coburn notes that “to varying degrees, each of these fields represents interesting and many times-important areas of research and discovery. But do any of these social studies represent obvious national priorities that deserve a cut of the same pie as astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, and oceanography? The recent tragedy in Japan highlights the importance of nearly all of these natural sciences and how a better understanding of each can improve our abilities to protect life and property from natural occurrences such as earthquakes and tsunamis. . . . Rather than ramping up the amount spent on political science and other

social and behavioral research, NSF’s mission should be redirected towards truly transformative sciences with practical uses outside of academic circles and clear benefits to mankind and the world.”

Coburn’s indictment of NSF also cites grant management failures, including a lack of final reporting on grants, and NSF Inspector General reports from 2004 and 2006 as indicators of waste and fraud. The full report is available on the Senator’s website, <http://coburn.senate.gov/public/>.

Education Department Eliminates and Reduces Many Programs

At the completion of the FY 2011 appropriations process, the Department of Education was asked to significantly reduce many of its programs. Higher education programs were reduced by \$352 million. Congress did not specify the cuts, although some suggestions were proffered by the House. The DoE has now made its choices.

With its FY 2011 funding reduced by almost 87%, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) withdrew its solicitation for grants under the Comprehensive Grants program. No new awards will be made under the Comprehensive Program in FY 2011.

With regard to the Title VI International Education and Foreign Language programs, the Department reduced total funding by approximately 40%, from \$125.9 million in FY 2010 to \$75.7 million in FY 2011. Title VI Domestic Programs will receive \$66.7 million in FY 2011, as opposed to \$108.4 million in FY 2010. The Fulbright-Hays program will sustain a cut from \$15.6 million in FY 2010 to \$7.5 million in FY 2011. The Institute for International Public Policy will decline to \$1.6 million from \$1.9 million in FY 2010. At the moment, there is no information on how these cuts will affect each of the programs within Title VI and Fulbright-Hays.

In addition, the Javits Fellowship program that awards graduate students in the social sciences, humanities, and arts will see its \$9.7 million funding reduced by 16.5%. The department eliminated the Thurgood Marshall Legal Scholarships, a \$3 million program to help underrepresented minorities prepare for law school, as well as the Robert Byrd Honors Scholarship Program and the Emma Byrd Scholarships. At the Institute for Education Sciences, the department reduced funding for the Regional Laboratories by \$13.1 million and for statewide data systems by \$16.1 million. Under the FY 2012 budget request, the administration would restore funding for both these and the Title VI programs.

Other programs eliminated include Women’s Educational Equity (\$2.4 million), Academies for American History and Civics (\$1.8 million), Javits Gifted and Talented (\$7.5 million), and Civic Education—We the People (\$21.6 million).

In contrast, the administration increased Race to the Top funding by \$699 million, adding a new provision allowing states to use the funds for early childhood education grants. ■

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