

Declassified documents may be re-examined

Fear of espionage fuels Congress' consideration of law

WASHINGTON (AP) — Box-by-box, sometimes line-by-line, government record keepers have worked the past three years to declassify 600 million pages of documents, opening doors to America's secret past.

Now, because Washington fears that China got its hands on U.S. nuclear secrets, these bleary-eyed declassifiers could face a daunting new task: Doing it again.

Legislation headed for approval in Congress would require all of the documents to be re-examined to make sure that sensitive details about the U.S. nuclear arsenal do not slip out of the government's attic.

"This is all part of the frenzy about Chinese espionage that is driving Washington crazy," said Steven Aftergood, who directs The Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists. "The idea that they're going to reread material that's already been declassified is preposterous. It will basically cripple the declassification program by driving it in circles."

Present efforts to lift the veil of government secrecy are driven by an executive order President Clinton signed in 1995.

The order instructs federal agencies to open — by April 2000 — classified records that contain historical material and are more than 25 years old. Exceptions are narrowly defined.

In the past three years, more than 600 million pages have been declassified.

Subjects range from the Cold War to Vietnam, POWs to UFOs. Researchers are rewriting history with new information about the U.S.-Soviet arms race, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, a 1973 coup in Chile, covert action around the globe, and more.

The public already can access 400 million pages that have been unsealed. Another 200 million pages are declassified, but are not yet on public shelves. Nearly 1 billion more pages still must be reviewed.

Declassification was moving at a fast clip until last year when some lawmakers worried that nuclear secrets — still classified under the Atomic Energy Act — were not being properly protected. Sens. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz.; Richard Shelby, R-Ala. and Bob Smith, I-N.H., wrote to National Security Adviser Samuel Berger saying that "in a frenzied attempt" to meet the April 2000 deadline, documents containing sensitive nuclear weapons information may have been released or were in danger of being released.

Such concerns prompted Congress to pass a law last year requiring declassifiers to come up with a plan to scan documents, page-by-page, looking for nuclear material — unless the records were "highly unlikely" to contain such information.

Kidney, marrow transplant may prevent organ rejection

BOSTON (AP) — A woman received a new kidney along with a bone marrow transplant in a pioneering operation that doctors said will spare her from having to take anti-rejection drugs for the rest of her life.

The bone marrow should make it easier for her immune system to accept the new kidney, doctors said.

Dr. Thomas Spitzer, who as director of the Massachusetts General Hospital bone marrow transplant program participated in the operation, said the approach has promising ramifications for other transplant patients.

The operation was believed to be the first time a patient received a kidney and bone marrow transplant in a single operation, according to Spitzer and other experts. Spitzer reported on the case in yesterday's issue of the journal *Transplantation*.

The patient, a woman in her 50s from the Boston area, was diagnosed with kidney failure about a year ago. At the time, she learned she also had cancer of the bone marrow — multiple myeloma — that had caused the kidney failure.

She underwent surgery at Mass-

achusetts General Hospital last September, receiving a new kidney and bone marrow from her sister to treat both the kidney failure and the bone marrow cancer.

"It [the transplants] could benefit many patients who need transplants."

— Dr. Thomas Spitzer
Director of transplant program

Many transplant recipients must take strong drugs for the rest of their lives to suppress the immune system so it will not attack the new organ, which the patient's body sees as a foreign invader. But these drugs leave patients vulnerable to severe infections and can cause other serious side effects.

In the Boston patient, however, the infusion of bone marrow had the effect of blending her immune system with her sister's. As a result,

the new kidney was not entirely foreign to her body and she was better able to accept it, Spitzer said.

The woman took anti-rejection drugs for just 73 days. She now has completely normal kidney function and her bone marrow cancer is in remission, Spitzer said.

Bone marrow transplants are not done solely to prevent organ rejection because they are invasive and carry risks, Spitzer said. But doctors might be able to achieve the same result by giving transplant patients enough stem cells, which are contained in blood and bone marrow, he said.

"If we can, by introducing a donor's immune system — even at a very low level — create this kind of transplant tolerance, then it could benefit many patients who need transplants," Spitzer said.

"I think it is a very significant achievement that they were able to treat renal failure plus an underlying bone marrow disease," said Dr. Thomas E. Starzl, a professor of surgery at the University of Pittsburgh who pioneered liver transplants in 1967 and was not involved in this operation.

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