

CIA to Open Up Secrets,

Reuter

CIA Director R. James Woolsey announced yesterday he was lifting the veil on a broad range of Cold War secrets as part of an effort to open the spy agency, "warts and all," to closer public scrutiny.

In testimony before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Woolsey said he had approved a new "block review" system for releasing secret analyses on topics of special historical interest 30 years or older.

"This means that for these records we will be doing away with the painstaking, line-by-line review in favor of scanning documents so they may be declassified at greater speed," he said.

This category would include thousands of analytical papers and more than 350 so-called national intelligence estimates, Woolsey said. Such estimates, prepared for the president, synthesize the views of the CIA with those of the other parts of the U.S. intelligence community.

Woolsey said documents relating to the Korean War and deepening U.S. involvement in Vietnam in the early 1960s would be among those to be declassified through the new system. He did not say when this material would be released.

But he said the agency was completing declassification work begun last year under his predecessor, Robert M. Gates, of more than 500 national estimates done between 1947 and 1983 on the the former Soviet

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'Warts and All,' Director Says

Union. "When the protection of certain information is no longer required, then we owe it to our citizens to work hard to disclose as much of that information as we can, consistent with our mission—warts and all," Woolsey said.

He said he also had ordered declassification review of "significant Cold War covert actions" more than 30 years old, including activities in support of democracy in France and Italy in the 1940s and 1950s, support to anti-Sukarno rebels in Indonesia in 1958, support to Tibetan guerrillas in the 1950s and early 1960s, operations against North Korea during the Korean War and operations in Laos in the 1960s.

Woolsey said the agency also was declassifying its files on Berlin at the

height of the Cold War and planned to release next year the first unclassified history of the CIA.

He said the agency expected to declassify and release within the next month 80 percent to 90 percent of the 10,000 or more pages of CIA material related to the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy. It initially sought to withhold them last month.

Woolsey said he was building on moves to greater openness started by Gates, who announced plans to declassify records on the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the overthrow of the president of Guatemala in 1954 and the 1953 coup that installed the late Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in Iran. Those documents are expected to be released by

the end of this year and, at least in some cases, reflect significant errors by the CIA.

The CIA is taking the wraps off national intelligence estimates on the Soviet Union from 1947 to 1961 on Thursday, along with previously classified articles from its quarterly journal, "Studies in Intelligence."

Woolsey said the declassification of records, including embarrassing ones, was consistent with President Clinton's goal of changing the way classified information is handled and was in the interest of better understanding the Cold War. But he emphasized that some old secrets would remain classified to protect intelligence sources and methods—for instance, the names of Cold War spies in the East Bloc.