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Subject: NY Times Story
CIA: HOW TO TELL SECRETS OF '60S and '70S/112/By TIM WEINER WASHINGTON -- The CIA publicly pledged in 1993 to release its files on its most important covert actions of the cold war -- coups in Iran and Guatemala, the Bay of Pigs fiasco -- in a matter of months. The promise is unfulfilled. The documents remain secret. Why? A panel of outside experts hired by the agency cites "a clash of cultures" inside the CIA pitting cold warriors against open-minded historians. Another factor may be that the agency has devoted only three ten-thousandths of its budget and seven full-time employees to the task of making the documents public. A stack of secret files taller than 50 Washington Monuments awaits them. The CIA has another explanation: it's Oliver Stone's fault, sort of. Stone's 1991 movie, "JFK," which insinuated that a military-industrial-espionage conspiracy killed President Kennedy in 1963, provoked Congress to establish a JFK Assassination Records law in 1992. It ordered that government files on the assassination be made public. Then President Clinton took nearly a year to name members of a review board to oversee the release of the files. Now the CIA's historians are carefully explaining to the board the precise basis for every one of the thousands of excisions they want to make in its documents. That time-consuming effort made the pledge on the covert-action records impossible to keep, the agency says. But one of these days -- maybe this year, maybe next -- the agency says the files on the 1953 coup in Iran, which installed Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlavi; the 1954 coup in Guatemala, which installed the first of several military governments, and the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961 will begin to see the light of day. That much was promised in August 1993 by a top CIA official, who said it would come to pass in 1994. In the fullness of time, the agency says, it will review and release files on its covert actions supporting political parties in France and Italy in the 1940s and 1950s, insurgencies in Indonesia and Tibet in the 1950s and 1960s, insurrections in the Belgian Congo and the Dominican Republic in the 1960s and secret operations in North Korea during the Korean War and Laos during the war in Vietnam. That promise was made in September 1991 by R. James Woolsey, then the director of central intelligence. "Declassifying cold-war records," he told Congress, "goes to the very fabric of our democratic system. We work for the American people. 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." If the job of rolling away the stone that blocks the entrance to the agency's buried archives recalls the myth of Sisyphus, then pity should be taken on the man given that task, John Pereira, the chief of the historical review group at the CIA. Pereira, a scholarly man of 63 who has worked as an intelligence analyst and as a spy since 1962, presides over eight agency employees and 25 retirees at the Ames Building, a CIA office

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