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Subject: Is the CIA still keeping their secrets? /from the New York Times
~A THIRLT- AOL//4344.2334.WP04033.243/1020.3/0304420 /4/ 3. Panel Says CIA Secrecy Threatens to Make History a LiePanel Says CIA's Secrecy Threatens to Make History a LieBy TIM WEINER WASHINGTON -- The official record of U.S. foreign policy stands in danger of becoming "an official lie" if the CIA keeps refusing to release cold-war documents from the 1950s and 1960s, a State Department historians' committee warns in a forthcoming report. The refusal to publish cold-war history is "a violation of the law and of American standards," the committee and its chairman said in a report and a letter to Secretary of State Madeline Albright. "This Republic cannot survive if government is secret and not held accountable for its actions." At the core of what the committee calls the "crisis" over the control of government history is the CIA's continuing refusal to publish documents on its best-known cold-war covert activities, including paramilitary actions involving Cuba, Indonesia and Tibet, despite continuous promises of openness by the agency dating back six years. "If sufficient documentation cannot be declassified to provide the broad outlines of those covert activities, any U.S. government documentary compilation about our foreign policy in situations where such activities took place will be so incomplete and misleading as to constitute an official lie," the chairman of the historians' committee, Warren Kimball, a professor of history at Rutgers University, told Albright in a letter accompanying the committee's report. Kimball's letter said a new panel with the potential power to resolve some aspects of the problem met for the first time on Feb. 16. The three-person panel, with high-ranking members of the CIA, the State Department and the National Security Council, has the power to decide whether covert operations may be acknowledged by the U.S. government. If the White House agrees to disclose the existence of these operations from the late 1940s, the 1950s and the 1960s, documents about them can be declassified. "It's taken a long time to get to this point," a senior intelligence official said Wednesday. "The developments are positive, though there's not that much to show for it yet." The State Department has published the official record of American foreign policy, "The Foreign Relations of the United States," continuously since 1861. These thick books contain primary documents from which history is written. Continued publication of the series is imperiled by secrecy, the committee says. The panel, created by the State Department to insure the historical integrity of the official record, can recommend the Department prevent publication of volumes. Under the law, government records should be available to the public after 30 years, once they have been cleansed of potentially harmful secrets like the names of covert agents. But the CIA has not been able to live up to the law. The agency promised in 1993 to publish records on 11 major cold-war covert operations which it acknowledges having happened. To date, it has published a tiny fraction of

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