Part. A request will not be considered received until it reaches the IMO. Ordinarily upon its receipt a request will be date-stamped as received. It is this date that establishes when your request is received for administrative purposes, not any earlier date such as the date of the letter or its postmark date. For the quickest possible handling, both the request letter and the envelope should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Request."

(b) *Electronic Reading Room.* ODNI maintains an online FOIA Reading Room on the ODNI Web site which contains the information that the FOIA requires be routinely made available for public inspection and copying as well as other information determined to be of general public interest.

(c) *Confirming the existence of certain documents.* In processing a request, ODNI shall decline to confirm or deny the existence of responsive records whenever the fact of their existence or nonexistence is itself classified under Executive Order 12,958 and its amending orders, reveals intelligence sources and methods protected pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 403–1(i)(1), or would be an invasion of the personal privacy of third parties. In such circumstances, ODNI, in its final written response, shall so inform the requester and advise of his or her right to file an administrative appeal.

(d) *Time for response.* Whenever the statutory time limits for processing a request cannot be met because of "unusual circumstances," as defined in the FOIA, and the component determines to extend the time limits on that basis, ODNI will inform the requester in writing and advise the requester of the right to narrow the scope of his or her request or agree to an alternative timeframe for processing.

(e) *Multitrack processing.* ODNI may use two or more processing tracks by distinguishing between simple and more complex requests based on the amount of work and/or time needed to process the request, including through limits based on the number of pages involved. ODNI may provide requesters in its slower track with an opportunity to limit the scope of their requests in order to qualify for faster processing

within the specified limits of its faster track.

§ 1700.8 Action on the request.

(a) *Initial action for access.* ODNI staff identified to search for records pursuant to a FOIA request shall search all relevant record systems within their cognizance as of the date the search is commenced. A staff member tasked to conduct a search shall:

(1) Determine whether records exist;

(2) Determine whether and to what extent any FOIA exemptions apply;

(3) Make recommendations for withholding records or portions of records that originated in the staff member's organization and for which there is a legal basis for denial or make a recommendation in accordance with § 1700.7(c). In making recommendations, ODNI staff shall be guided by the procedures specified in § 1700.10 regarding confidential commercial information and § 1700.11 regarding third party information; and

(4) Forward to the Director, IMO, all records responsive to the request.

(b) *Referrals and consultations.* ODNI records containing information originated by other ODNI components shall be forwarded to those entities for action in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section and returned. Records originated by other federal agencies or ODNI records containing other federal agency information shall be forwarded to such agencies for processing and direct response to the requester or for consultation and return to the ODNI. ODNI will notify the requester if it makes a referral for direct response.

(c) *Release of information.* When the Director, IMO (or Appeals Authority) makes a final determination to release records, the records will be forwarded to the requester in an appropriate format promptly upon compliance with any preliminary procedural requirements, including payment of fees. If any portion of a record is withheld initially or upon appeal, the Director, IMO (or Appeals Authority) will provide a written response that shall include, at a minimum:

(1) The basis for the withholding, citing the specific statutory exemption or exemptions invoked under the FOIA with respect to each portion withheld,

unless documents are withheld in accordance with § 1700.7(c);

(2) When the withholding is based in whole or in part on a security classification, the explanation shall include a determination that the record meets the cited criteria and rationale of the governing Executive Order;

(3) When the denial is based on 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(3), the statute relied upon; and

(4) Notice to the requester of the right to judicial review.

§ 1700.9 Payment of fees, notification of decision, and right of appeal.

(a) *Fees in general.* Fees collected under this part do not accrue to ODNI and shall be deposited immediately to the general account of the United States Treasury.

(b) *Notification of decision.* Upon completion of all required review and the receipt of accrued fees (or promise to pay such fees), ODNI will promptly inform the requester in writing of those records or portions of records that will be released and those that will be denied.

(1) For documents to be released, ODNI will provide paper copies or documents on electronic media, if requested and available;

(2) For documents not released or partially released, ODNI shall explain the reasons for any denial and give notice of a right of administrative appeal. For partial releases, redactions will be made to ensure requesters can see the placement and general length of redactions with the applicable exemption or exemptions clearly with respect to each redaction.

§ 1700.10 Procedures for business information.

(a) *In general.* Business information obtained by ODNI from a submitter shall not be disclosed pursuant to a FOIA request except in accordance with this section. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) *Business information* means commercial or financial information in which a legal entity has a recognized property interest;

(2) *Confidential commercial information* means such business information provided to the United States Government by a submitter which is reasonably believed to contain information exempt from release under Exemption 4 of the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4), because disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm; and

(3) *Submitter* means any person or entity who provides confidential commercial information to the United States Government; it includes, but is not limited to, corporations, businesses (however organized), State governments, and foreign governments.

(b) *Designation of confidential commercial information.* A submitter of business information will use good-faith efforts to designate, by appropriate markings, either at the time of submission or at a reasonable time thereafter, any portions of its submission that it considers to be confidential commercial information and hence protected from required disclosure pursuant to Exemption 4 of the FOIA. Such designations shall expire 10 years after the date of the submission unless the submitter requests, and provides justification for, a longer designation period.

(c) *Process in event of FOIA request—* (1) *Notice to submitters.* ODNI shall provide a submitter with prompt written notice of receipt of a FOIA request encompassing business information whenever:

(i) The submitter has in good faith designated the information as confidential commercial information, or

(ii) ODNI staff believe that disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to cause substantial competitive harm, and

(iii) The information was submitted within the last 10 years unless the submitter requested and provided acceptable justification for a specific notice period of greater duration.

(2) *Form of notice.* Communication to a submitter of commercial information shall either describe the exact nature of the confidential commercial information at issue or provide copies of the responsive records containing such information.

(3) *Response by submitter.* (i) Within seven days of the notice described in