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CPS/ERM/mem

MAY 15 1946

MEMORANDUM TO: Acting Chief, Central Planning Staff

SUBJECT: Central Register; Planning Directive No. 25

1. Problem: To provide an efficient central register, or index, of intelligence information in order to better coordinate and control intelligence research.

2. Facts:

a. Interchange of intelligence information is now largely dependent on individual knowledge of material available in the various collections. There is no general interchange of acquisition lists.

b. Each of the four N.I.A. agencies claims its particular filing system is satisfactory; none use a punched card system of control. State has four separate filing systems as the result of acquiring four libraries using different systems.

c. Each agency periodically checks its files to remove obsolete material and to determine what new material should be acquired for its own use. No specific time interval is set for the check and the inspection is normally the opinion of one individual.

3. Discussion:

a. The intelligence groups of State, War, Navy, and Air were contacted to obtain their views on the problems. Other Government agencies were not contacted at this time as it is felt the above agencies are primarily interested and if a central register is established, other Government agencies will cooperate.

b. Each of the four agencies agreed that a central register, or index, of intelligence information is highly desirable to facilitate interchange of information, although there is not unanimous agreement as to the method of operation. Except for Air, objections were expressed to placing old material on a new index system. However, once a system is established, research personnel can complete a work sheet to classify any old material they use and thus gradually bring a large portion of it onto the new system.

c. There is difference of opinion on using a punched card control system in a central register. From discussion of the problem it appears that a punched card system is preferable because of its flexibility in control and classifying of the broad range of subjects; in addition it

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will automatically provide for an accurate check on the date and grade of any indexed material to indicate necessary additions or deletions.

d. There was unanimous opinion that if a central register is established it should be under supervisory control of CIG, location and operating personnel to be agreed upon.

e. The following questions have developed:

(1) Should a central register, or index, of intelligence information be established (this has received unanimous approval of the representatives);

(2) If a central register is established:

(a) What agencies should contribute data to it;

(b) Where should it be located;

(c) Who should have supervisory control of it;

(d) What type of indexing system should be employed;

(e) What personnel will be required to operate the selected system; and

(f) What are the limits as to type of information to be indexed in the central system.

4. Action Taken:

The Intelligence Branch has arranged to meet with representatives of the four agencies on 16 May as an informal committee to approximate initial steps necessary to solve the questions listed in 3e above.

5. Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Intelligence Branch meet in informal committee with representatives of the interested agencies at such times as it deems desirable in order to formulate final recommendations for formal action.

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Intelligence Branch

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