

15 January 1971

TAT MEMORANDUM FOR: [redacted] Office of the Inspector General
SUBJECT :

1. I thank you for the opportunity to read the section on Records Management in the first draft of your current study. In ruminating on your analysis I agree with your findings and your criticisms of certain paperwork conditions that exist in the Agency. I find I cannot agree with a few conclusions which endeavor to place responsibility for those conditions. I believe this difference of opinion is because of a difference in our views of basic policies related to paperwork management. This difference in viewpoint is not between you and me, it is between the Records Program as it is required to exist because of unique management practices necessary within the Agency and the theoretical concepts of ideal Records Management principles and procedures which are known and available.

2. The orders followed by my predecessor, [redacted] as Agency Records Manager for some 15 years was to operate a Records Storage facility and Records Program using persuasion, instruction, and assistance for the components as well as to conduct research, adaptation, and implementation of sound paperwork practices with qualified personnel, economical equipment, and efficient procedures. I have continued and expanded his policies, philosophy, and practices.

3. But, the first order given to me by the DDS Executive Officer in January 1957 was that I was not to be a "records management czar" and that the Records Regulation "will not be strengthened." "You will use a soft sell in Records Management." Although Mr [redacted] was inclined to a stronger, more centralized Records Program if we could find some unobtrusive way to make it palatable and acceptable to the Directorates, everyone in the Agency has repeatedly and emphatically insisted that all records operations were and would continue to be under decentralized authority and practices. This position has been regularly proven each time our staff has challenged an instance of bad paperwork procedure. We persist and we succeed from time to time, but we have experienced rejections of our efforts to correct poor forms creation, supply, and distribution; in correspondence improvement; in reports management; in equipment purchases; in secure area construction; in neglected vital records; in records control scheduling; and in destruction of important historical documents as well as holding of unimportant files. The new technology of microfilm procedures and equipment as well as computer tape storage have joined the trend.

- e. Similar details can be provided of proportionate problems and accomplishments in the field of records scheduling which has controlled the moving of a quarter million cubic feet of records out of the offices and the destruction of a and even greater amount.
- f. Likewise, the availability of records management guidance in our staff expedited the recent survey of Agency reports which was requested by the President through the OMB. This last survey reported the Agency had some 3,000 reports that cost us more than four million dollars per year. Our urgings for an Agency Reports Management Program to control and improve these reports continues to go unimplemented.
- g. At my insistence we continue to preserve some 4,000 boxes of vital records. This is an unpopular decision but the components whose records are being protected support the action. Recently O/PPB has expressed concern to the Information Processing Coordinators that vital records on magnetic tapes are not properly protected. This too has long been urged by this Program but is neglected for want of records keeping policies and Records Managers in the Computer Centers. I feel other vital records need protection.
- h. The problem of Agency files has been only partially solved by our Agency Handbook [] for a Subject Numeric Filing System. This guide focuses on Administrative files that are common to all components. The specialized files are treated where necessary in special guides by the individual components. These are usually developed locally with our staff assistance. Control of file equipment and supplies are in our HHB [] which requires Records Officer certification of the requisitions for safes and special supplies and equipment for records.
- i. The Agency Records Center operation responds to requests from components with an average of 500 reference actions per workday. (A reference action may be a phone call, one document, or several boxes.) This averages to some ten thousand actions per month or about 120,000 per year which supports the contention that the records are stored for future use and are not merely relocated and unwanted by indecisive officers. No records are accepted without a positive records schedule with a date for disposition action. We feel the Center should not be responsible for storing and handling extra distribution copies of Agency reports, publications, and maps. We service 15,000 cubic feet of supplemental distribution material and can only insist on disposition schedules from the publishing components.

storage to provide three times greater storage capacity per square foot of floor space used for file equipment. This campaign continues to be ignored officially, is unpopular and resisted by logistics warehouse operators who fight shelving equipment which requires more handling than a safe, and is decried by management-level security officials. Today about half the Agency's 200,000 cubic feet of records are on shelves instead of safes. The shelves cost about \$100,000 and 30,000 feet of floor space. Otherwise those files would require eight million dollars worth of safes (12,500) and 100,000 square feet of floor space. This and the shelving development below come primarily from the efforts of a man with the Agency since OSS in 1941. His dedication, resourcefulness, and expertise is hailed throughout the Government records circles that repeatedly ask to borrow him for training sessions. Today's limited office space has taken over from us some of the task of applying pressure for greater use of shelving.

- c. Five years ago the Staff introduced movable shelving to further increase the density of records storage per square foot of floor space. We quickly succeeded with several units throughout the Agency. The first motorized movable shelving unit in the Federal Government was installed in the Agency more than a year before any other Agency. To date we have committed more than a half million dollars to movable shelving installations. We encourage its use where justifiable and are ready to assist those that want it. We can not and would not ask top management to order every office to install it. Neither do we broadcast it universally. We have recommended it where advisable.
- d. In 1963, after several refusals, the central staff decided it was dangerous to wait any longer for an Agency policy on Archives protection. The function was informally instituted using the standards employed by National Archives. We urged Agency components to participate and use the archives. Some 16,000 boxes of records are indexed and are now in the Agency Archives collection. Via staff persuasion, top management today acknowledges the need and Agency Historians bemoan the loss of old documents. We are ready and waiting with personnel, policies, procedures, and plans for an Agency official archives function. We estimate there is another 20,000 boxes of archives documents intermingled with some 50,000 boxes of temporary records scheduled for eventual destruction.

4. Nevertheless, we continue to introduce ideal and practical records procedures, reinforced by success and undaunted by rejection. The Central Records Program is manned by dedicated managers, knowledgeable in the science of records management and focused on the long term requirements of the Agency. Our objective is an overall records stability and long range program of records systems. We aim to help current operations and establish a soundly based records program ready to operate effectively, efficiently, and economically in any area that accepts it today or in the future. Good management must be desired before it is practiced. Good management procedures are a command responsibility and must be available when command seeks them. We strive to accelerate that eventually. But good management cannot be forced onto an Office. The Office must be educated to want it and seek it and use it. Unacceptance and passive resistance will kill the most noble and beneficial program.

5. Consequently, the Central Staff has focused its energies on creating a Program and six sub-Programs to improve paperwork operations in any segment of the Agency. These are spelled out in [] We have continually improved and up dated the Program in keeping with the changing office technology. With considerable success the staff members have been zealous missionaries in spreading the gospel of good records management and its rewards now and in the future. Most importantly, the staff has demonstrated a professional prescience which has kept the Agency in the vanguard of records advances instead of its being buried long ago under its own paperwork. That significant foresight and its results are readily demonstrated in the following:

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- a. Forms management--In the advanced field of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) for several years we designed the forms and printing specifications in our staff because no one else in Government or Private Industry was available to do it. Today National Archives and National Bureau of Standards phone our forms staff for technical details and briefings on OCR techniques. We were no less than five years in front of the rest of Government. The Marine Corps was in such desperate need for OCR help they offered our expert a grade advance to transfer. She stayed out of loyalty. The benefits of our OCR are excellent in the components that use it. We preach OCR to others, but the final decision is theirs. We are ready and persist.
- b. Another area of records policy foresight and the practical application of prescience is in records keeping equipment. Fifteen years ago this staff vigorously struggled against the firmly held "status quo" position in Logistics and Security that insisted on continued use of safes. The staff pushed for shelf

storage to provide ~~threetimes~~ greater storage capacity per square foot of floor space used for file equipment. This campaign continues to be ignored officially, is unpopular and resisted by logistics warehouse operators who fight shelving equipment which requires more handling than a safe, and is decried by management-level security officials. Today about half the Agency's 200,000 cubic feet of records are on shelves instead of safes. The shelves cost about \$100,000 and 30,000 feet of floor space. Otherwise those files would require eight million dollars worth of safes (12,500) and 100,000 square feet of floor space. This and the shelving development below come primarily from the efforts of a man with the Agency since OSS in 1941. His dedication, resourcefulness, and expertise is hailed throughout the Government records circles that repeatedly ask to borrow him for training sessions. Today's limited office space has taken over from us some of the task of applying pressure for greater use of shelving.

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