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19 September 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Support Services Staff

SUBJECT : Establishing a Centrally Administered Records Program

1. The requested outline of the elements necessary for a centralized Records Program is in paragraph 4 below following these statements of existing objectives and functions.

2. Since 1951 the continuing objective of the CIA Records Management Program has been:

"To control and improve records from their creation or receipt to their disposition."

This goal is prescribed more elaborately in Public Law 754 as follows:

"The head of each Federal agency shall establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of the records of the agency."

3. The CIA Records Management Officer and his central staff has developed a network of officers to implement the Program in each component and has set forth in Agency Regulations an overall Records Program that includes these specified sub-programs for records management action:

Forms -- Analysis, design, and control of forms.

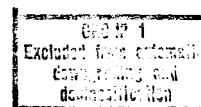
Correspondence -- Improved standards and procedures for preparing and handling correspondence.

Reports -- Analysis, improvement, and control of administrative reporting.

File Maintenance -- Establishment of standard procedures, systems, equipment, and supplies for records maintenance.

Records Disposition -- Preservation, retention, Transfer, protection, and disposal of Agency records according to approved schedules.

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Vital Records -- Timely selection and secure maintenance of records essential to continued operation of the Agency in an emergency.

Private industry and other Federal Agencies expand that list of sub-programs to include: Mail operations, office machines, source data automation, directives, documentation for audio, visual, and ADP systems, microfilming, and Archives.

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4. In 1961 the original central staff [ ] was reduced to [ ] and responsibility for Program implementation specifically assigned to each Directorate by DDS memorandum and regulation (attached). Unfortunately, this plan had two obstacles. Operational priorities and local preferences reduced the component man-hours available for the Program and also neglected the development of enough component expertise in the management of office records. The overcrowding of the Records Center indicates the component emphasis being placed on moving records out of the offices as well as the neglect of efforts to manage records creation or to improve records systems. The records personnel and Program developed centrally during the first ten years enabled the Agency program to survive during the last ten years. The attrition of qualified records officers and the costly confusion of independent records procedures must be reversed immediately. The Agency must prepare to meet the burgeoning records challenge inherent in the information explosion of the next ten years.

5. New responsibilities and provisions are required in order to effectively strengthen the Agency Records Program and to develop personnel. A central staff must operate to set standards and require each component to utilize the program as part of its administrative function. The following initial actions are necessary:

- a. Announcement of Records Concern by Top Management.
- b. Revise [ ]
- c. Reorganize the Central Staff and Procedures.
- d. Establish a Records Career Service.
- e. Provide training in Records Management.
- f. Publish Records Procedure Manuals.
- g. Conduct audits and prepare reports on components Programs.
- h. Establish operating requirements and delineate responsibilities.
- i. Revise Records Management Board activities.
- j. Increase liaison and coordination on records related matters with the microfilm panel, OCS, IPC, the Emergency Planners, and others.

6. Details on the ten items outlined above include:

- a. The importance of records and urgent need for a total Program approach to the problem, should be announced by Management with an expression of its intention to strengthen the Central Staff. The indication that greater attention and improvement of records procedures will be expected in every component will increase the chances of acceptance

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and success for subsequent actions. A memo from Col. White to the Deputies with a reminder they so inform their subordinates should suffice as the announcement.

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- b. The overall [ ] is based upon the Federal Records Program and covers all required sub-programs. The deletion of emphasis on "decentralized" program administration is the immediate action necessary in this administrative revision.
- c. The duties and responsibilities of the central staff personnel will be revised and delineated to guide them and the Component Records Officers. The Staff must provide more technical guidance to develop a records expertise among component Records Officers. Staffers should be less occupied in the actual tasks of records operations such as forms design, file inventories, or records scheduling and disposition efforts. The Staff's professional knowledge is not being sufficiently distributed because of its physical involvement in assisting a few offices with no program and only a part-time Records Officer. Three additional staffers are required to establish such neglected sub-programs as Reports and Correspondence Management and to cover the new Agency interest in microforms. Personnel especially competent in the preparation of instruction manuals and procedural guides will be sought to prepare and publish technical assistance now provided orally and soon to be lost thru personnel retirements. Revision of activities, services, and priorities will permit more circulation and greater personal contact by staff with component problem areas rather than by mail and phone. Assistance with existing sub-programs must continue to be provided until the components can be weaned to assume responsibility for the local records effort. A stronger centralized Program is expected to permit the establishment of standards and procedures for the components to follow in their records programs. Centralization is not intended to recreate the large central staff to personally accomplish all the records program chores for the components. Technical guidance and development of personnel and programs are the primary objectives. After ten years in the Records Program I have never yet seen any senior officer who was not astonished at the enormity and complexity of the Agency records problem after he spent a week or two studying it in depth. Further, they always recommend upgrading the Central Staff. Unless this is a serious consideration, these centralization plans cannot succeed.
- d. Equally important as the central staff are the Records Management Officers in the components and their immediate supervisor the Directorate Senior Records Management Officer.

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This network must be formalized via a Career Service. The chain of command and pyramid of progress, challenge, and rewards must be clearly established and announced. Sufficient administrative precedent and guidance can be found in the Personnel and Security Career Services to aid in developing this new one. The Agency and Directorate Senior Records Officers are a natural Career Board. The IG Records Survey a few years ago and [redacted] more recent analysis recommend a Career Service saying "There seems little prospect that this problem will disappear without some fundamental change in the personnel structure of the Agency's records system". [redacted] calculated some [redacted] positions related to records work of which about [redacted] were "pure records types". I agree with him but I believe many will be reluctant to leave their career designations for the long-standing "records orphan" in a new suit. We will probably have to start with 30 to 50 people and several will have to run programs in many small offices at once. But I have always felt the climb up through periodic assignments and Agencywide rotation in progressively larger and complex records positions would prove to be as challenging, attractive, and useful as any other profession such as personnel or finance.

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- e. Excellent training in records management and procedures has always been available, but the Central Staff could never do more than coax and persuade people to attend. The appreciative responses have always been equally sincere and convincing whenever someone took the training or avoided it. This new program finally will provide for systematic training and development of all determined to succeed in the records world. Our only danger is outside proselyting of our more successful products. Our OTR does not offer Records Training but our staff, the DDP, and National Archives are well established with training courses.
  - f. In the past we have leaned heavily on National Archives for records procedure manuals. Ten years ago the large central staff did have authority and manpower to develop, publish, and distribute many manuals and guides for the records program. The revised staff must update these and produce others as necessary. Rotating personnel and even some assignments out to component Records Officers will provide the much needed procedural aids.
  - g. The periodic visits to the components by the central staff have been useful and appreciated. Their reports to me were informative but we did not feel these initial contacts and evaluations should be submitted to the offices. The evolution of these necessary audits will accelerate and the reports and follow-up for corrective action will be more acceptable under the centralized program.

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- h. In the past the responsibilities and general job description for records officers have been devised by the offices concerned and have reflected their emphasis and preference. Registries and libraries, file rooms and mail rooms all appeared with various degrees of emphasis displayed in various offices. A delineation of duties and consistent vocabulary of responsibilities and values should help in many areas.
- i. The mission and function of the Records Management Board will become more meaningful and productive with this Career Service relationship. The activities and research should be more responsive to the Chairman in the new environment.
- j. Agency liaison on records matters has recently shown a marked improvement. I am firmly convinced the Records Program can and will assume a stronger position in the world of automation and microforms. This new role will prove to be extremely beneficial to the coordinating units, much to their surprise and satisfaction. The presence of a qualified records officer during the initial planning phase of any Project will inevitably benefit because of the new focus on the usually neglected but essential paperwork procedures.

7. The foregoing are but a fraction of the total Records Program, since only those seriously involved or altered by the centralization change have been touched upon to a degree. Other developments are certain to be found during the change-over.



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CIA Records Administration Officer

DDS/SSS/RAB/[redacted] pr (19 September 1969)

Attachments:

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 Orig - addressee  
 1 - RAB  
 1 - C/A+RC  
 1 - Chicago

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