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DDP 72-2228

18 May 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT: Records, Archives and History
(Annual Chronicles)

1. This memorandum is restricted to a discussion of the Annual Reports requirement outlined in your 9 May 1972 memorandum. Other features of that memorandum will be the subject of brief follow-up comment later.

2. The proposed requirement for units and offices of the Agency to prepare annual chronicles of their activities in the context of archival and historical use continues to cause the CS serious concern. Reservations stem, in part, from the unknown -- what units would be required to compile chronicles, what degree of detail is contemplated, what ultimate use is envisaged, etc.

3. As noted in my memorandum of 25 April, the narrative included in the CS Program submission highlights operational thrusts, progress, problems, plans, operational activity, and collection levels in sufficient detail to tell where we are, results to date, and where we think activity will take us. In most cases, the data included in the Operating Program does and will surface those subjects which can be the theme of subsequent historical study. With the program inventory in hand, is there really a compelling need for annual chronicles that will in large measure duplicate this already existing material?

4. From the CS standpoint, duplication is only a part of the problem. Experience in preparing historical papers in the past and the shortage of manpower have led us to conclude that future efforts will be attempted only when writing talent is available. We know such talent is not uniformly available in all CS components, and that, if it is available, the demands of more urgent business

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has usually pre-empted these skills. The several recent papers that outline the CS history program have recognized these realities. Thus, the usefulness and primary purpose of annual chronicles are questioned, because we simply could not exploit them.

5. An annual report based upon the calendar year has an easily recognizable neatness but it also has a built-in inflexibility. Seldom, if ever, will a significant CS activity fall within a single year. Indeed, one would be hard put to cite an exception. Thus, from the Directorate's point of view, the maximum that can be expected is a segmented account of events and effort as they carry over into successive years. With the chronicle destined to being a serial of episodic chapters fashioned largely out of context and without knowledge where the future might take an activity, it is difficult to imagine the report serving more than as a "tickler" for writers of history. I hope you will agree with me that an annual historical report, particularly with these weaknesses, is not an appropriate vehicle in which to record "conclusions and recommendations for future action," i. e., it should not be an action paper.

6. If, in spite of the foregoing, the call for some sort of annual report is eventually promulgated, I would urge you to forego a January schedule. That timing would conflict with the latter stages of the Directorate's annual Program review and the preparation of the Operating Program, efforts that involve the components at all levels. These activities are vital to an evaluation of what the CS is about and to its search for resources. Any requirement that competes with these exercises would present a serious conflict of interest and would surely impinge on the quality of all three. If an annual report is to serve any CS function, even marginally, it should precede the onset of the Program review cycle which begins in October. Thus, I am glad to hear that you have tentatively decided to conform the schedule of the annual chronicles, if there are to be such, with that for the PFIAB Annual Report.

7. Finally, I would reiterate the necessity to work out direct CS participation in formulating the program, distribution, use and controls over annual chronicles, and procedures that would assure

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formal CS overview of all contributions of other Directorates
that include materials and references to CS data and activities.

/s/
Thomas H. Karamessines
Deputy Director for Plans