

~~SECRET~~
2 April 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Document Division. *W*
THROUGH : Chief, Processing Branch. *W*
SUBJECT : Retrieval of Documents at VMR.

1. PROBLEM:

Retrieval of Documents at VMR.

2. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

a. At the present two systems exist at VMR for the retrieval of documents received by CIA for storage. Documents can be retrieved by common control numbers or by subject and area. With the exception of CIA reports, no system exists for the prompt recovery of specific documents identified only by the report series of the issuing agency, e.g. American Embassy, Paris, Desp. 1585, 11 March 1958.

b. Provided that the subject of the requested non-CIA report is known, a three stage search for the specific document can be made. First the Intellofax run is made. Allowing for maximum definition (locator, security classification, and date being available), the Intellofax run could produce as many as one hundred references. These would provide the common control numbers, but no other information, since bibliographic citations do not appear on the Intellofax cards at VMR. The next step would be a search of the aperture work cards in order to obtain the proper reel numbers. Finally, the reels would be searched from end to end (batch numbers do not appear on the aperture work cards); it is conceivable that 10,000 feet of reel film would have to be searched in order to obtain the specific document.

3. CONCLUSION:

Consideration of an additional means of retrieval, by source, would appear to be in order. Since the Agency may be called upon to service the entire Intelligence Community under emergency conditions, it should be prepared to provide rapid retrieval of documents by the report series of the issuing Agency. The system presently used would be inadequate; it requires more manpower than would be available, it is too time consuming, and it does not guarantee success. It should be anticipated that the volume of requests would be for specific documents and not for documents by subject; the CIA Library requests for specific documents consist of approximately eighty percent of the total requests at present.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. A source card file should be provided for VMR. Either a duplicate should be sent to VMR from Document Division, or the source card file in Iy/Circulation should be filmed by the rotary camera. The latter technique would avoid the expense of filing the duplicate, but would mean a slightly less current source file at VMR.

b. In either instance a further saving of time in the retrieval would be made by including the reel number on the source card. This would amount to having the microfilm clerks indicate the reel numbers on the batch envelope for the typists. The source file would reference the reel and batch numbers, thereby obviating the need to search the aperture work cards.

c. The aperture work card file should be retained for the servicing of requests which provide the common control numbers.

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Chief, Distribution Section