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19 June 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Document Division, CR

SUBJECT : Numbering of State, AID and USIA Airgrams

REFERENCE : A. Staff Study of 26 May 1961: Document Control Numbers for State Department Reports

B. DD Procedure of 15 January 1963: New Numbering System for Defense Reports

C. DD Procedure of 17 April 1963: Modification of Numbering System for AID Airgrams

D. Chief, Control Section memo of 27 May 1963: Post Locators for Selected State Documents

1. Problem: Inadequacies of the present numbering system cause machine processing difficulties.

2. Background: Reference A established a 7 digit meaningful numbering system for State despatches. The first digit, indicating the source, was changed from 4 to M to prevent duplication with those 4 million numbers already used. Three digit post locators and 3 digit despatch numbers rounded out the 7 digits. Certain posts were assigned 2 digit locators in anticipation of four digit report numbers. The system was subsequently extended to AID and USIA airgrams, using a dash and an ampersand respectively for the first digit.

Several 3 digit State posts have run over 999 airgrams requiring special handling in Machine Division to accommodate 3 digit numbers. Reference C, providing for 3 digit numbers on all AID airgrams by expanding into the source locator column, resulted from several AID posts submitting 3000 or more airgrams.

At the beginning of 1963 the new 10 digit Defense numbers were conveniently accommodated by putting the first digit in the source locator column (immediately preceding the 7 digit control number column) and the last two digits (year) in the columns immediately following the control number column which were already used for the year.

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3. Discussion:

Experience has indicated that 10 digit numbers can be conveniently accommodated in the columns presently provided on the tab card, since the first digit, indicating source, in most cases serves just as well as the letter indicator. If in the future the entire 9 million series is converted to 10 digits some sources would have to be sorted on more than one column on infrequent occasions when a sort by source is required.

All three divisions would benefit by converting State, AID and USIA airgrams to a 10 digit system similar to the Defense System, but based on the present locator system. Reference D proposes the assignment of post locators to several regular airgram series from various special posts (international committees, etc.) which heretofore have been given an M 800,000 serial number. The remaining items numbered in the 800,000 series (finished intelligence and other headquarters items) should continue to be numbered the same way pending the findings of the Meaningful Number Committee. In converting to 10 digits State Airgrams would have to return to use of a 4 (vice M) for the first digit since the letter M is used in the locator column as an indicator for CS reports. AID and USIA would continue to use the dash and ampersand for the first digit as a distinctive source indicator.

4. Conclusion

A ten digit numbering system based on the present locator system should be adopted for State, USIA and AID incoming airgrams.

5. Recommendation

A. Adopt a 10 digit control number for State, AID and USIA airgrams in accordance with the attached procedure to be effective with documents dated 1 July 1963. (Airgram numbers repeat at the beginning of each fiscal year).

B. Continue the use of the 800,000 series for non-airgram documents from all 3 sources pending any recommendation for a change from the Meaningful Number Committee.

C. Document Division should assign post locator numbers to any new incoming airgram series including those listed in Reference D.

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CONCUR:

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