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SUMMARY OF PANEL REPORTS

from the 1971

CONFERENCE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICERS

A. CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

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1. The Fifth Annual Conference of Agency Records Management Officers was held at [REDACTED] on Thursday and Friday, 2-3 December 1971. These two-day, training-oriented meetings concentrate on special records problems. They provide an opportunity for component Records Managers and office administrative personnel to gather, away from their offices, to learn about new developments and techniques, to exchange experiences of common interest, and to strengthen the esprit de corps necessary for the development of the Records Program and its personnel.

2. This year the Conference responsibility and participation were distributed more widely among the component Records Officers. The first four Conferences were created, developed, and implemented by the Agency Central Records Staff. Although speakers were selected from each Directorate the Agenda and emphasis of the theme were selected by the Agency Records Administration Officer based upon his understanding of the prevailing records problems. This year the Records Management Board was requested to establish a Committee to develop the Agenda and select Panel leaders. The Central Records Staff provided coordination, supervision, and implementation. A sense of participation motivated general enthusiasm and dedication which were reflected in the excellent Agenda, serious work of the Panels, their positive contributions, and the favorable comments in the final critiques. Attached as TABS A thru H are the full reports received from Panels A thru H, while TAB I is the list of Panel Chairmen, TAB J is a copy of the Agenda, and TAB K is a summary of the critiques.

B. PANEL OPERATIONS

1. This year the Conference again used a format which proved successful for us in 1968 when conferring on microfilming problems related to records systems. The Conferees were organized into eight panels of 10 to 12 members. They were required to study two related problems and to submit their Panel proposals on the conference floor.

2. In order to obtain the ideas and support of all component Records Management Officers, all Panels worked on the same two questions of concern Agencywide and requiring positive action during this Fiscal Year:

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- a. How to keep the net annual growth of each Directorate's Volume at the Records Center below 1,000 cubic feet per year?
- b. How to develop Records Retention Plans and identify "Offices of Record" in each Directorate?

3. The Panels met two or three times before the conference, conferred with Directorate and Agency Records Staffs, researched the related statistics and procedures, and at the Conference had four hours of meetings in which to develop their conclusions. Each Panel reported to the full Conference and to the CIA Records Management Board which is to take action on the proposals. After the Conference each Panel submitted a written report to the Board Chairman. The keynote speaker, the Assistant Deputy Director for Support, requested a report on the Conference and Panel recommendations.

C. SUMMARY OF PANEL REPORTS:

1. In the written reports of the eight Panels there is some duplication of specific conclusions but different priorities often supported the rationale leading to their final recommendations.

2. Overall the Panel reports may be consolidated and summarized into three major problem areas (a. Retention Plans, b. 1,000-foot limit, and c. Program General) with two sub-problem areas in each as follows:

a. Completion of Retention Plans for Permanent Records:

(1) New Control Schedules versus Plans versus Directories.

One Panel recommended updating and expanding Records Control Schedules to incorporate the Offices of Record for both temporary and permanent records while other Panels favored an initial effort to identify the more valuable permanent records in a separate Retention Plan while still another Panel suggested issuing a Directory of Offices of Record. (The majority favored preparing Retention Plans and the Agency Records Administration Officer is having them prepared as the first priority action to meet the requirement set forth on 1 July 1971 in the Executive Director-Comptroller's memorandum to the DDS requesting action to identify the Offices of Record for Agency files.)

(2) Formalize the System for Completion of the Plans.

There is a general consensus that a complete and current Records Control Schedule is essential for improved records management as well as the logical start for a Retention Plan. The Panels proposed this

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procedure for developing them:

- (a) Management to announce a formal requirement for the Plans.
- (b) Conduct files inventories and describe their volume and location in each component.
- (c) Analyze the inventory and regulations to determine the component responsibility and its related files.
- (d) Coordinate within the Directorate to establish specific components as "Offices of Record" for certain files.
- (e) The Directorate Records Management Officers will coordinate with other Directorate and Agency Records Officers to resolve duplicate Offices of Record for certain files.
- (f) Component Records Officers will implement Retention Plans approved by the Agency Records Administration Officer. The RMOs will change scheduled records retention periods in accordance with approved Plans and retire records or dispose of unofficial holdings.
- (g) RMOs will begin identifying Offices of Record for temporary records.
- (h) Review and up-date Plans periodically.

(At the Conference instructions were distributed. Since the Conference two forms for the Plans have been designed and issued. Component and Directorate Records Officers report having met and are working on their local Plans.)

b. Controlling the Storage Net Growth Limit of 1,000 feet.

(1) Improve Records Schedules and Critical Control of Space Use.

Generally, the Panels agreed that the Records Control Schedules are the most effective tool for controlling records disposal. They strongly recommend tightening and up dating them as well as preparing new schedules to better control Supplemental Distribution material and emergency Vital Records stored in the Records Center. Immediate disposal of all extra copies was urged with issue of xerox copies to meet supplemental requests. Similarly it was proposed that a management policy statement should be issued on the Agency emergency mission to permit a new critical review of component Vital Records collections. The Panels also proposed establishing an interim storage area in the headquarters for short term records. The Panels urged more thorough screening before retiring records and to require certification of such action. They requested a continuous accounting system to ensure that net space savings were held in escrow to a Directorate's credit for future use, if necessary. (The accounting system

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does exist. As of 1 July 1971 the Directorates began the Limited Storage Policy with the following cubic feet of records in the Records Center: DCI 2,148; DDI 20,873; DDP 24,169; DDS 21,837; DDS&T 4,127 Archives 17,367; for an overall total of 90,523: Component totals as of that date are available at the Center.)

- (2). Expand Records Officer Involvement in Management Practices. The Panels urged more Records Officer control of Records Creation via Forms, Reports, and Correspondence Management. They also proposed that at the time of creation or printing all documents and publications should be marked "Record Copy" or "non-record copy". Also the disposal date and Office of Record should be indicated on reports and publications. They stressed the need for full-time, trained Records Managers and for educating administrators as well as clerical personnel on Records Management procedures and benefits. More outspoken Management support of the Records Program is considered essential. Microfilming possibilities should be explored and used where retention periods and costs justify. Use microforms for publication distribution. More files should be moved from safes to shelves. File equipment controls were advised. Volume limits for records in headquarters offices should be established. Special attention was focused on recovering for reissue the freed equipment in offices where microfilming is completed or a functional transfer or reorganization takes place. They reported that Records Management is an integral part of good management practices and is separate where good management fails. Too often records management is dealing with after-the-fact situations.

c. General Records Program Improvements

- (1) Management is Responsible to set Program Policy and Investment.

Even the briefest scanning of each Panel report finds repeated stress on the need for an official statement by Top Management concerning its Records Management Policy and the degree of investment it desires in each Directorate for the Records Program. Top Management understands the need for records control but it must convey this urgency to Office Heads to have them include the allocation of resources for Records Management in their offices and plans. The Panels emphasized that Records are a full-time management problem not a step child of registry operations. Records Officers must be afforded time to survey records systems and to teach personnel working directly with records how to take collective action.

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(2) Expand Records Program Requirements

The Panel reports include several general recommendations for the overall Records Program. They propose that systems analysis training be part of the Records Officer's skills. They ask for a Spring Conference on records problems, more meetings, and equal opportunities for external training. They ask elimination of Records Officer disparities among Directorates. As usual several recommend a Career Development Program for Records Officers "like Personnel, Logistics, Security, etc." It was proposed that Directorate Records Management Officers should report directly to the Agency Records Administration Officer and be evaluated and have their Fitness Reports prepared by him. More records management training is suggested for clerical, secretarial, and supervisory personnel.

D. FOLLOW-UP ACTION:

Copies of the Panel reports were furnished to the members of the CIA Records Management Board. This report and possible follow-up action on the Panel proposals were considered at the Board's 25 January 1972 meeting. Some proposals, such as the Headquarters interim storage area and a Records Career Service have been explored in the past and will be reconsidered at this time. The Panel proposals will be studied by the Board members to determine what action is required at the Component, Directorate, and Agency levels. These will be identified and corrective action taken by the Records Officers or where appropriate formal requests developed by the Board and submitted to the officials concerned. The Agency Records Administration Officer will coordinate the follow-up action.

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CIA Records Administration Officer

Attachments:

TABS A thru K
as stated above.