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16 February 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Planning, Programming & Budgeting Staff,
                 NPIC

THROUGH   : Chief, Plans & Programs Division, PPBS

SUBJECT   : Management Information System Recommendations

1. Per your verbal request, I have considered the MIS problem and, after some preliminary discussion, offer my recommendations in paragraph 5.

2. Two years ago, a staff of four was assigned to maintain and operate the MIS. Since that time, for various reasons, the MIS staff has gradually been reduced to one. This reduction in personnel has had a serious effect on the MIS -- updates take longer, files are not purged, and errors are not getting corrected.

3. In an attempt to remedy this situation without increasing the size of the staff, on 30 August 1970, the Chief/AID instituted new procedures to speed up MIS updates by placing the responsibility for correcting man-hour data on each Center component. Initially, these new procedures seemed to answer the MIS dilemma because during September 1970 the MIS update was completed on time, including correction of all errors. A staff of one, however, is without back-up, so again the system gradually fell further and further behind in the error correction phase and, consequently, in the computer updates.

4. It should be noted that one of the reasons behind the 30 August 1970 change in procedure was that the MIS was two months behind schedule -- the July and August 1970 man-hour data had not been corrected. On 11 January 1971, it was found that the July and August errors still had not yet been corrected. Further, now there is an additional backlog of errors to be corrected for the months of October, November, and December 1970. In addition, in spite of constant urging by this staff, the MIS has not been purged of closed projects prior to August 1968. What the Center actually has then is an MIS master file contained on three magnetic tape reels (one would do if closed projects were purged) which does not correctly reflect manpower utilization after July 1970.

5. If the trend outlined above continues -- and there is no reason to think that it will not -- then by June 1971 we will have an incomplete fiscal year of data by which to measure the Center activities. I am convinced that there is no way to remedy this situation but to have PPBS take complete charge of the MIS. Therefore, I recommend:
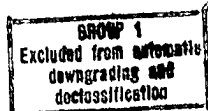
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a. Transfer two of the original four MIS slots from PSG/AID to PPBS/RAD.

b. Continue operating the MIS under the current procedures, but augment the MIS staff by tasking, on a part time basis, one individual from each of the three groups to perform the following activities within their group:

1) Collect and validate all time sheets

2) Submit time sheets for keypunching to OPB/AID.

3) Review error listings with MIS staff and produce error free cards.

4) Submit corrected cards to MIS staff for input into the MIS file.

5) Code retrieval parameters for special retrievals.

6) Analyze the MIS needs of their respective Groups and present their findings to the MIS Staff.

6. In conclusion, it is clear that PPBS can hold tighter reins on the MIS if these recommendations are approved and that they place each Group in a close working relationship with the MIS requiring active participation. In addition, the needs of each group can be surfaced through the working representatives thus minimizing the creation of redundant information systems.

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