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/ DEC 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Reports Inventory Task Force

SUBJECT : Improving Federal Reporting and Reducing
Related Paperwork

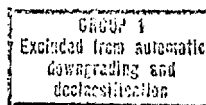
REFERENCE : OMB Transmittal Memorandum Number 1 to
Circular A-44 revised 17 June 1970

1. We are proceeding with the review and analysis of reporting systems in the Support Directorate as outlined in your memorandum of 12 November. The success of our effort, as you have recognized, will be completely dependent upon the degree of cooperation we receive from the other Directorates and OPPB. We will keep you informed of our progress and seek your help with problems if we need it as we go along. I am still concerned, however, about the total scope of the program, its long term implications, and how the Agency plans to deal with it. Problems and studies of this sort are more effectively dealt with at the Agency level rather than subordinate echelons.

2. Transmittal memorandum Number 1 says that "the objectives of this study are to improve reporting, reduce related paperwork, and eliminate unjustified reporting requirements and associated reporting systems." The scope of the study includes a review of reporting requirements; a review of the organization, functions, and resources used for reporting systems and reports management, and the recommendation of improvements; and the conduct of research and development studies to formulate future plans for reporting systems. Each report is to be justified to the satisfaction of the Project Director, and the justification must be certified valid by someone at the Assistant Secretary level or its equivalent. Justification and certification responsibility may not be delegated.

3. If we are going to have a program in the Agency to cover the full scope of the government program and satisfy the objectives of the transmittal memorandum, it must, in my opinion, be sponsored

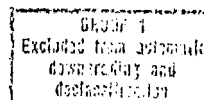
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at the Agency level. Execution and administration of the program perhaps can be accomplished at the Directorate level, but only if there are Agency guidelines which can be applied and adjudicated equitably and with the same interest and purpose throughout the Agency. The fact that reports management is a continuing requirement tied directly to the broader management improvement program to be implemented under OMB Circular A-44 Revised suggests that our treatment of the Reports Management Program should be considered in those broader terms.

4. The circular requires that "each department and agency head...establish a formal, organized management effectiveness program..." with the objective of concentrating "management attention on persistent problem areas." These areas are to be identified by a "systematic review" of Agency activities and operations. Within the Agency the Deputy Directors are required to establish their own management improvement programs and "identify those activities which they feel need inter-Directorate or Agency-wide attention." Having them identified is one thing. Doing something about them is an entirely different matter. The Agency has no mechanism or structure to permit inter-Directorate or Agency-wide problems to be dealt with systematically. We deal with them by creating another Board, Committee, or Task Force and, in order to spread the work load, the membership is rarely the same. So it is with the present exercise: Circular A-44 is being handled through the PRB mechanism; the "Information Explosion" is being dealt with by the Inspector General and TM-1 is being dealt with ad hoc by an entirely different group. Unless we take some steps now to introduce more orderliness into the marshalling of resources to deal with these problems we will be in no better position to deal with transmittal memorandums 2, 3, 4 and following than we are to deal with TM-1 or inter-Directorate or Agency wide problems identified internally. The prospect of being plagued repetitively and continuously by requirements of this kind suggests that it might be profitable to consider whether we want to continue to treat them ad hoc or seek some more systematic approach. It might also suggest that we should address the question of whether or not the Agency gives enough attention to the management of the pervasives, ligatures and coagulants of the organization of which reports management is only one. Others are suggested for future study in paragraph 7 of A-44. We can begin this consideration as a part of preparing ourselves to respond to TM-1.

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5. Guidance from the Agency level is required regarding the degree to which compliance with the scope and intent of TM-1 is intended. We are currently engaged in a review at the Directorate level of the reporting requirements, but we need to know what the Agency intends with regard to:

- a. reviewing the organization, functions, and resources used for reporting systems and reports management;
- b. the conduct of research and development studies to formulate future plans for reporting systems;
- c. the establishment of criteria for justifying existing reports which are to be continued and new reporting requirements which will evolve;
- d. the establishment of the level of authority at which the validity of the justification will be certified.
- e. the establishment and maintenance of a continuing reports management program at the Agency and subordinate levels.

6. Reports Management is directly related to information processing. More than half the reports and more than half the costs of reporting systems identified in the inventory recently completed are the products of computer driven systems. People involved in the information processing world are accustomed to dealing with requirements and requests for information to be produced as regular or periodic reports; to analyzing and designing systems to produce them; and to assessing their general merit and the justification for them. More than half the reports and reporting systems are directly related to the day to day operations of the information processors. It would appear that they would be in the best position to assume responsibility for taking the actions necessary to satisfy the requirements of TM-1 with the least impact on their current duties. If the Agency is to take the reports management problem seriously it would seem to make sense to do it within the existing mechanisms.

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7. I offer these thoughts for your consideration. In any case, further guidance is needed about what the Agency intends to do with regard to the scope and objectives of TM-1.

/s/

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Chief, Support Services Staff

DDS/SSS/RHW:rf (1 December 1970)

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