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STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DRN/NIS - Mr. Lawrence Egbert   DATE: October 21, 1955

FROM : DRN/NEB - H.W. Glidden

25X1

SUBJECT: Transliteration Handbook [ ] of January 1954

  In reply to your memo of October 11, 1955 I offer herewith the following observations on the transliteration of Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew as set forth in this handbook:

  1. Arabic (p.2):

   a) The alif (first letter) should have a hamzah (ʾ) placed over it with the notation (omit when initial) following in parentheses.

   b) The letter alif maqsūrah (ى) should be inserted after ي (Y) and transcribed by a.

   c) The letter tā marbūtah (ة) should be inserted after alif maqsurah with the notation that it is to be transcribed by -ah when pausal and -at when in construct.

  2. Hebrew (p. 17):

   a) Since this system seems to go on the principle of eschewing diacritical marks, I don't see why this principle was not followed in Hebrew whereas it was followed in the case of Arabic and Persian. If diacritical marks are to be used, then they should be used in Arabic and Persian also. If they are not to be employed then the line under h to transcribe Hebrew ח, and the line under s to transcribe Hebrew ש, and the lines under t to transcribe ת and ט should be omitted.

   b) Mere graphic variants of certain letters (ך, ם, ן, ף), and ץ) should not be listed as if they were separate letters, which they are not. If it is desired to keep them, they should be represented on the same line as the basic form of the letter and separated from it by a comma (,).

   c) The aspirated and unaspirated form of ת have both been rendered by t underlined, which is an error. Actually, this letter is pronounced in modern Israeli Hebrew as a simple "t" with or without the daghesh lene and hence should be transcribed simply as "t" with no underlining.

   d) It should be noted that when a dot in a letter indicates be doubled.

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3. **Persian:**

a) The ha<u>mezah</u> sign (^{S}) should be added at the beginning and transliterated as ⟩,

b) <u>Alif maqsūrah</u> (ə) should be added after ⟩ʃ (y) and transcribed by "a."

c) The letter <u>alif</u> in parentheses (⟩) should be omitted before and ⟩ .

The use of diacritical marks to indicate long vowels at least is highly desirable in all three of these languages in view of the confusion of meaning which often arises when they are omitted. Since vowel length has been indicated in the system of Japanese transcription set forth in this handbook, it is urged that this practice be extended to the three languages I have dealt with above.

OIR:DRN:NEB:HWGlidden:mhm

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : DRF - Mr. John Lacey   DATE: October 18, 1955

FROM : BI - Barbara P. Finke

SUBJECT: <u>Transliteration Handbook</u> issued by CIA/FDD

We have checked the transliteration handbook against systems in use in the various branches of BI, and find the answers shown in the check list which follows.

As for our general policy regarding standardization, BI has had to face this problem in a most practical way in every country we cover, and we are very much aware of the need for standardization as well as of the difficulties which prevent it in some areas. For areas where a certain standard has won general recognition BI is especially eager to see this standard enforced on all agencies, and therefore favors wide dissemination of standard guides by CIA/FDD, or any other competent agency, to facilitate universal compliance. This applies especially to such cases as the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean romanization systems.

For areas in which there is no generally recognized standard, as for example in Pakistan and India where romanized forms of personal names have been almost universally adopted but not according to any standard, we feel that it would only add to the present confusion to try to enforce a system which practically no one is using. In such cases we have tried to solve the filing problem by adopting a preferred spelling in our files, and, for example, filing all variations of MUKERJI under one form but not attempting to "correct" other variations such as MOOKERJEE, or MUKERJEE.

Specifically, BI deals with the various languages as follows:

I. Arabic -- BI follows DRN (Glidden) whose comment will come to you through Lawrence Egbert, DRN.

    Armenian -- BI has received no Armenian language material, and has relatively few Armenian names in file, and no "system."

    Bengali -- BI has not applied any system to Bengal names. See above comment re: Pakistani and Indian names.

    Greek -- BI follows the system shown in the handbook.

    Hebrew -- BI follows the system shown in the handbook.

    Hindi -- BI has not applied any system to Hindi names. See above comment re: Pakistani and Indian names.

Hindi --
(con't.)
(An example of the problem is the name:
Chakravarti RAJAGOPALACHARI, so romanized
in practically all Indian usage, though
standardization might split the last name
into three names, Chakravarti Raja Gopal
ACHARYA, which would be unrecognizable.)

Persian -- BI has not received enough Persian language
material to require adoption of a system.
We have dealt with variant spellings by
cross-references.

Urdu -- BI has not applied any system to Pakistani
names. See above comment regarding Pakis-
tan and India.

Yiddish -- BI has not encountered many Yiddish names,
perhaps because they are changed to Heb-
rew equivalents before we get them.

II. Chinese -- BI uses Wade-Giles as shown in the handbook.

Burmese -- BI uses spellings reported by the Embassy.
We cannot change our system due to lack
of personnel who can read Burmese.

Thai -- BI follows the system in the handbook.

III. Japanese-- BI uses the Hepburn system as shown in the handbook.

Korean -- BI uses the McCune-Reischauer system as shown in
the handbook.

IV. Russian -- At present BI is not following the CIA/FDD trans-
literation system in its files. However,
there is no insurmountable problem in convert-
ing to the system insofar as our own filing
operations are concerned: during the past two
years we have been receiving monthly from FDD
hundreds of cards which utilize this system,
and we have been able to integrate them into
the files without great inconvenience.

At present, a real problem arises only in the
preparation of reports on Soviets. In doing
the Key Personalities for NIS 26 we utilized
for the first time on a broad scale the CIA

IV. Russian --
(con't.)

transliteration system; since then, in pre-
paring reports for which CIA is a major con-
sumer we have tended to use the same system;
however, other parts of the Department (DRS
and EE) have not yet converted to this sys-
tem, so that in reports prepared especially
or only for Departmental consumption we tend
to utilize our old transliteration system.
Enforcement of a standardized and universally
accepted system, in our opinion, would create
some temporary mechanical problems in our
filing, but on the other hand it would remove
an operating hazard which in time could lead
to considerable confusion in the BI files on
the USSR.

The Eastern Europe Branch's only serious ob-
jection to the proposed CIA transliteration
system for Russian is that it makes too much
use of the letter "y". Since there appears
to be no easy method for avoiding this, how-
ever, we cannot oppose adoption of the pro-
posed system on substantive grounds.

Soviet   ) At present BI is not following the CIA/FDD
 Armenian   --) transliteration system in its files. However,
Belorussian--) BI would confront no great problem in con-
Bulgarian   --) verting to the system shown in the handbook.
Serbian   --)
Ukrainian   --)

OLI/BI:BPFINKE:vls
October 18, 1955