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MAR 31 1948

Director, Central Intelligence

Assistant Director, Reports and Estimates

Machine Produced Gazetteers of Foreign Geographical Names

THROUGH: 1. Chief, Reference Center, Administration and Management  
2. Executive for Administration and Management

1. In view of the shortage of funds for such purposes, the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) has not been able to publish and disseminate the foreign Official Standardized Names which all agencies are required to use in the preparation of written reports and in the compilation of maps and charts.

2. As a consequence of the foregoing, CIA and the IAC agencies do not know which foreign names have been standardized for official use, and must therefore refer all questions in such matters to the BGN. This procedure is unsatisfactory in the following respects:

a. It needlessly increases the cost of foreign name research to CIA and the IAC agencies.

b. It requires BGN researchers to reprocess completed work rather than to press forward with name research on unprocessed areas.

c. It delays publications of intelligence reports and the preparation of maps and charts of foreign areas.

d. It reduces the number of official standard names available for use by the CIA and IAC agencies.

3. This problem could be resolved by the publication, maintenance, and dissemination to CIA and the IAC agencies of gazetteers of Official Standardized Names for all foreign areas produced from the working files of the BGN. The proposed NIS program contemplates such action as an initial step in the preparation of Chapter II for each country or area. Availability of such gazetteers would materially reduce the overall cost of name research for the NIS program.

4. Investigation of the problem has indicated that the application of machine record techniques to the production of gazetteers is more practicable, efficient, and economical than any other available method of operation. This determination was made not only by technical machine record experts, but also by representatives of CIA and the IAC agencies who have approved the attached machine produced specimen gazetteer on USSR. (See Tab A for specimen.)

5. While the BGN does not have funds appropriated, nor the required personnel, for such purposes, it does have access to IBM machines currently under rental by the Department of the Interior.

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6. It is requested that the Reference Center, A&M, undertake a Foreign Names Gazetteer Project which will result in applying machine records techniques to the Standard Foreign Names files of the U. S. Board on Geographic Names, in order that CIA and the IAC agencies may benefit by the dissemination of machine produced gazetteers of Official Standard Foreign Geographic Names.

**THEODORE RABBITT**

Encl.

Specimen Gazetteer on USSR

P&PS/ [REDACTED] /vjf

**Distribution:**

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