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Executive Registry

84- 293

16 January 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Information Systems Board Members

FROM: [REDACTED]

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Executive Secretary to the Board

SUBJECT: Minutes of 16 December 1983 Meeting of the  
Information Systems Board1. The Information Systems Board met on Friday,  
16 December 1983. [REDACTED]

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2. [REDACTED] opened the meeting asking for additions or  
corrections to the minutes of the meetings held on 17 October and  
17 November. (In a telephone call to the Executive Secretary  
following the meeting, [REDACTED] proposed alternate wording to one  
sentence in the minutes of 17 November. Page three (paragraph 6,  
line 3) of the minutes has been changed and reissued.) [REDACTED]

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3. [REDACTED] asked that the meeting be devoted entirely to a  
discussion of the recommendation of the Workstation Environment  
Working Group as briefed at the previous meeting:

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"It is recommended that Options 2 + 3 + 6 be adopted as the  
near-term solution to the Agency's word and data processing  
terminal requirements.

Option 2: Minimal Wang Connectivity

Continue to devote resources to provide minimal  
connectivity (i.e., file transfer) between the Wangs and  
the IBM mainframes. In addition, make the Wang Alliance  
terminals interactive with the mainframes, recognizing that  
only a subset of the available interactive functions will  
be available.

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Option 3: Delta Data On-line WP (HBWP)

Allocate additional resources to improve Host-Based Word Processing (HBWP) so as to offer as much Wang-like WP functionality as possible in the Delta Data.

Option 6: Commercial PCs (On-line and Stand-alone WP + DP)

Meet new terminal requirements with commercially available PCs. They would offer all of the capability cited ... plus have the added advantage of nearly limitless availability of applications software. Note that this option is burdened with several unique costs. One is that Agency resources would have to interface the PCs to the mainframes ..."

[redacted] noted that he had received memoranda from six Board members and several Working Groups and members detailing opinions about the recommendation; he asked each Board member to share his thoughts with those present. [redacted]

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4. [redacted] began the discussion, stating that the Working Group's report provided a valuable framework for a discussion of the important issues. He suggested that more detailed technical information would be required before a final decision about any significant use of personal computers could be made. He pointed out that the next Agency standard terminal probably should have a stand-alone word processing capability and that the replacement of Wangs and Delta Datas with personal computers offered a potentially valuable option as a long-term goal. The DDO, he concluded, favored a feasibility study, preferably soon, which would include the cost of connecting personal computers to the Agency's current mainframe architecture. [redacted]

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5. [redacted] strongly urged that the recommendation of the Working Group be adopted and that no further studies be undertaken. He opined that the Board should lead the Agency toward updating its automated systems rather than follow as one component after another adopted new technologies on its own. He suggested that a prototype study might be valuable if it put personal computers into the hands of a number of users quickly, but that no study should take longer than 90 days. [redacted]

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6. [redacted] then drew attention to the memorandum from the Computer Security Working Group, which had been distributed to Board members at the beginning of the meeting, and asked [redacted] to comment on any security considerations connected with a switch to personal computers. [redacted] replied that the memorandum before the Board stated the security issues clearly and that such issues would have to be resolved before any particular device was chosen. He recommended, however, that the Board make its decision based on the operational functions needed rather than focusing exclusively on security. [redacted]

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7. [redacted] commented that OIS agreed with the recommendation to open the Agency to personal computer use. He suggested that a requirements and cost study would be beneficial, but he agreed with [redacted] that any study should be a short one. [redacted]

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8. [redacted] completely endorsed the Working Group's recommendation but also saw a need for a short prototype study. If the Board decided to task the Working Group to produce additional requirements and cost information, he argued, ODP would have to assist the Working Group's efforts. [redacted] agreed with [redacted] and [redacted] and further urged that the Board use this occasion to move the Agency into the era of distributed data processing.

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[redacted] stated that ORD also endorsed the recommendation, noted that a prototype study would be worthwhile, and suggested that the Board begin thinking about a long-term ADP investment strategy. [redacted]

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9. [redacted] agreed with previous speakers that the Working Group's report was useful. He argued, however, that no decision on the recommendation should be made until further technical details -- requirements, costs, and implications for the overall Agency ADP architecture -- had been analyzed. He pointed out that the draft of HR 10-26 -- "Electronic Information Processing System Security" -- called for restricting the use of personal computers within the Agency until "the full security impact of personal computers can be assessed." [redacted] strongly recommended that the Agency do a cross-directorate prototype study -- perhaps by ordering five to ten copies of the most interesting personal computers for each directorate -- and select the terminals based on actual user experience rather than on paper requirements alone. In order to conduct such a study, he pointed out, the prohibition against the use of personal computers in the draft HR 10-26 would have to be eased. [redacted] agreed that this could be done. [redacted]

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10. [redacted] agreed with those members who felt that detailed requirements, costs, and implication information was necessary before a final decision is made and suggested that an independent, outside contract tackle the problem. In response to a question from [redacted] suggested a six month study by a team of consultants -- perhaps one from IBM, one from Wang, a specialist in personal computers, and an overall contractor to coordinate the effort. The price tag for such a study, he felt, would be about \$500 thousand. [redacted] further indicated that OD&E could act as the contracting office if the Board so wished. In response to a question from [redacted] about the length of time such a study would take, [redacted] "bet his E-Systems credit card" that OD&E could complete such a study in six months. [redacted]

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11. [redacted] suggested that the group not get involved in any lengthy studies of the problem because "there will never be any one terminal or device that will answer our automation needs -- technology is moving too fast." He further recommended that the Agency needed to adopt a "flexible strategy" for dealing with the

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inevitable changes and improvements that advancing technology would provide. [redacted]

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12. In answer to [redacted] query about funding for the effort, [redacted] confirmed that \$500 thousand could be made available. He commended the wisdom of investing in an assessment of the implications for the Agency's overall architecture "in order to avoid a horrible kludge downstream." He further suggested that the Board adopt a two-pronged strategy -- first, a contract study of the requirements, costs, and implications of moving to personal computers; second, and simultaneously, a prototype study concentrating on those personal computers already being used by the Agency. [redacted]

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13. [redacted] felt that the decision to use commercially available personal computers in large numbers was "too important to be made on the basis of present information." He suggested that the personal computer question be included in the teleconferencing plan currently underway in ODP. He announced that ODP would ask for user representatives to assist in the writing of that plan and suggested that members of the Working Group could also participate. Because the personal computer industry is currently in a state of flux, he argued, the Agency should not commit itself to the personal computer route too early. [redacted] also agreed that a six month contracted study was appropriate and volunteered ODP as the contracting office. [redacted]

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14. [redacted] reminded the Board that the Working Group's final report was due in August, although the recommendations contained in the interim report were to be taken as final. He wondered whether the additional questions raised by the Board could be answered by the Working Group. The general consensus of the Board was that the Working Group would have to devote full time to such a study and, in any event, probably lacked some of the expertise necessary to do a complete assessment of costs and implications. Several Board members announced that they could not spare their representatives on the Working Group for even two or three months full time. Several members suggested that the Working Group serve both as an advisor to the contractor and as the first sounding board for the contractor's report. [redacted]

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15. [redacted] suggested that the Working Group be asked to "stand down" on their final report until the contractor's effort had been completed. [redacted] stated that he would write such a memorandum to the group, including the Board's thanks for the well-received Interim Report. [redacted] mentioned that the Working Group's final report was intended, in part, to inform ODP's impending request for proposals for follow-on workstations to the current Delta Data contract. [redacted] indicated that sufficient time remained for that input and that the Working Group members, as well as other users, would be asked for their advice. [redacted]

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16. [redacted] mentioned that he had not originally been in favor of an outside contractor to do such a study but felt that the consensus of the Board was to proceed in that direction. He stated that he would ask the DDA -- as head of the Directorate most concerned with all the issues -- to organize the effort. He accepted the suggestion of [redacted] that they cooperate to write the statement of work and choose the contract team, and he asked [redacted] to identify the funds available for an outside study, assuming a maximum of six months and \$500 thousand. He also asked [redacted] to remove the restrictions on the use of personal computers contained in [redacted] until the study had been completed [redacted]

17. [redacted] then adjourned the meeting. The next meeting of the Board will be 19 January 1984, at 1330 hours in room 7D64. The topic will be computer security. (U)



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[redacted]