

182. To start with, much more vigorous adherence to the long-standing rule of "one subject -- one message" should be practised. There is, of course, a place for the "tour d'horizon" or the report of a discussion with some important personage which touches upon several matters on the one occasion. But there is an unfortunate tendency on the part of some authors to treat with disparate subjects in the one telegram without making clear the theme linking the various aspects in a manner to enable the document to be placed in a suitable subject file. Limitation of subject matter would shorten some telegrams, making them easier to classify and index, but would perhaps increase the number of separate telegrams.

183. Mention should be made here of the procedure instituted some years ago whereby the originators of messages abroad direct them to the "Action" and other addressees by three or four letter designations. There were some misgivings when this procedure was introduced but it has worked remarkably well. To meet the same objective, the United States State Department (and the C.I.A. as well) employ a corps of "disseminators" who make a quick analysis of incoming material to determine the complete list of addressees, every incoming communication being addressed only to the Secretary of State. In this the disseminators are assisted by the TAGS procedure (Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject), established in March, 1973, which is set forth in a 27-page book laying down a rather complex set of rules to be followed by posts and headquarters. Both the External Affairs addressee procedure and the State Department TAGS in effect provide the first "cut" at subject classification while bringing the material to the desk of the action officer.

184. Looking beyond the "addressee" lines, analysis of material in the Kard-veyer and of the daily telegram "pack" of substantive communications shows that in a significant proportion of telegrams the introductory material is either of only ephemeral interest (e.g. "I spoke to "X" after dinner last night") or of a trivial nature leading up to the real substance in later paragraphs. One idea that has been put forward to overcome this shortcoming is that all telegrams of two pages or more should be accompanied by a summary. This would transfer part of the function of analysis and classification to the originators in a similar way to the earlier step of requiring designation of specific addressees by unit or division.

185. The existence of good summaries of telegrams would undoubtedly provide several benefits. For example, the production of POPSUM would be largely simplified into a rapid selection process. More importantly, the Under-Secretarial Group (and others as appropriate) could be provided with a quick means of scanning the titles and summaries of the telegram "pack" on CRT viewing screens. This is dealt with more fully in paragraphs 110 - 112 in Chapter V on Level III and IV activities. Even in the absence of EDP techniques all information and distribution addressees of telegrams would find their reading tasks considerably eased. And finally, the Bureau Information Control Officers would gain much help for their subject classification and indexing tasks.

186. Despite all the benefits the writing of summaries would also carry some drawbacks. The writing of summaries would impose a burden on authors who would often be working under pressure and hence would skimp on effort for the summaries. In the case of shorter telegrams, the summary might seem pointless and would be omitted. The summaries would, of course, add to the total volume