As a first step towards devising a system to meet Departmental needs a statement of "System Criteria" was drawn up. These were seen as falling into three categories and were analysed in some detail. Briefly, they were identified as:

a) General Criteria Applicable to Any Information System

Economic safekeeping of records; timely delivery of material; assured access upon request; archival requirements satisfied; a flexible subject classification system; capacity to accommodate future development.

b) Criteria of Special Importance to External Affairs

Controlled access for researchers; satisfactory security arrangements; accommodation to a wide range of complex material.

c) Criteria Largely Specific to External Affairs

Compensation for rotational service; support for Departmental coordination role; support for certain operational functions; presentation of key information to support foreign policy role and to assist foreign policy correlation by senior management.

In examining Departmental needs in the light of these criteria a wide range of technical possibilities was studied in conjunction with systems being employed or developed in other institutions. There is no system now in use or being planned which could be adapted to meet the particular needs of this Department but the experiences of several others confirm many of the conclusions drawn upon in the drawing up of the "Preferred System". Briefly, the principal elements of the recommended or "Preferred System" are:

a) The creation of Information Control Offices within the Bureaux to provide the necessary close and direct contact with registry personnel and immediate access to current files;

b) The recruitment and development of non-rotational quasi-professional Bureau Information Control Officers:

c) The use of a computer for the indexing and retrieval of information