



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

January 16, 1980

TO: Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation

FROM: David F. Trask

SUBJECT: Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, November 8-9, 1979

The Executive Secretary, Dr. David F. Trask, called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. on November 8. Sessions were held that afternoon and at 9:00 a.m. on November 9. Committee members present were:

Dr. Alona E. Evans, Wellesley College
Dr. Alexander L. George, Stanford University
Dr. Norman A. Graebner, University of Virginia (2:15 p.m.)
Dr. Harold K. Jacobson, University of Michigan
Dr. Arnold H. Taylor, Howard University
Dr. Betty M. Unterberger, Texas A&M University
Mr. John R. Stevenson, New York City (9:00 a.m., 9 November)

Drs. Trask, William Z. Slany, and Arthur G. Kogan represented HO, and Mr. William P. Blair, Jr., represented PA. Numerous staff members of HO attended the sessions. Certain members of the general public attended the Thursday session, but the Friday session was closed to the public.

There follow comments on the various subjects discussed during the first session (open) and the second session (closed).

FIRST SESSION (1:15-4:00 p.m.)

1. Output of FRUS. It was announced that only two volumes had been published during the fiscal year. It is anticipated that at least four will appear during the next twelve months. The staff hopes that seven will be published, with ten the maximum number possible. The pace of publication depends principally on the outcome of efforts to complete declassification actions. Declassification

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP

Change to _____

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny ☐ Declassify

Exemptions b () () E.O. 13526 25x () ()

Declassify after _____

With concurrence of: _____ not obt.

obtained _____ Date 4-2-84

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was discussed in depth during the second session of the committee and is summarized below.

2. Pagination for the triennium 1958-1960. It has been decided to prepare a triennial set of 16 volumes for 1958-1960 consisting of 28,000 pages. This size compares favorably with the average pagination per triennium of volumes treating the period since the Second World War.

3. Word processing. For some years HO has experimented with in-house word processing to prepare nine-track tapes capable of running printing machinery at the Government Printing Office. This enterprise has established the feasibility of in-house activity. The Office has recently installed a Xerox VT 3 text-editing system that clearly meets requirements. HO still has not gotten into full production because of personnel losses in its support staff. When these losses are replaced, the Office foresees no difficulty producing the necessary materials on time. In the meantime contracts are being let to test the feasibility of contracting word processing and typesetting to outside firms. Two areas of difficulty exist. Can the Department locate firms with personnel cleared at the necessary security level? Can outside firms reduce the cost to the level attained in-house?

4. Microform supplements. Final feasibility tests are now being arranged with outside contractors. In response to inquiries from committee members it was stated that the work associated with preparation of such supplements would be minimal. Most of its work is already planned in connection with preparation of materials to be examined by the Classification/Declassification Center. Projected feasibility tests will map optimal procedures for relating microform to printed volumes. The cost would also be minimal, probably at the most rising to no more than one-tenth the cost of the printed edition.

5. Classification/Declassification Center (CDC). The Department has now centralized the process of conducting mandatory review and systematic declassification review of its records. HO is cooperating to the fullest extent possible with the Center during its early development. HO's ability to release published volumes will depend on the extent to which the CDC is able to maintain a schedule of work that should allow it to attain a twenty-year line in systematic declassification review by the middle of the new decade.

6. Lot files. H0 made it clear that it sustains a lively continuing interest in insuring the retention of permanently valuable lot files, although the responsibility for the files lies with the Foreign Affairs Document and Record Center (FADRC).

7. Russian project. The work of preparing the manuscript of the joint Soviet-American documentary collection treating the period 1765-1815 is now essentially complete. There remains the task of seeing the volume through the press, aiming at simultaneous publication of both the Russian and the English volumes during the summer of 1980.

8. Reorganization. The Office of the Historian was recently reorganized in response to recommendations of the team of inspectors that looked at the Office of the Historian as part of a regular inspection of the Bureau of Public Affairs. This reorganization eliminated the Operations Staff, created a general editor for FRUS, added a third geographic division, and centralized responsibility for declassification and research at the level of the office director. This reorganization should be helpful in improving the productivity of the Office.

9. Acceleration of FRUS. The Office remains committed to attainment of a twenty-year line in publication. We hope to approach a twenty-year line in compilation in the near future. The work of the Classification/Declassification Center is now scheduled to permit attainment of a twenty-year line in publication by the mid-1980s. If budgetary support is maintained at the same level and systematic declassification review kept on schedule, the program of acceleration can succeed. The series must now take into consideration a great deal of other-agency material, but delays caused by the complexities of the modern series can be counteracted by improved productivity in H0.

10. Usership survey. To develop accurate information concerning the perceptions, interests, and desires of the FRUS readership, the Office is preparing a questionnaire intended as a survey instrument among users.

SECOND SESSION (9:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.)

1. Budget matters. It was explained that H0's budget had remained generally constant in real dollars for some years and that planning was based on the assumption that resources would remain

generally constant for the foreseeable future. Therefore, to improve the quantity and quality of output H0 would have to emphasize productivity gains. In response to inquiries from members of the Committee, H0 indicated that it had maintained a reasonable output. It planned to complete compilation of the triennial set for 1955-1957 during the coming year (1980) and complete the set for 1958-1960 early in 1981. H0's belief that it could achieve an average of about two years of work for each triennial set was based on the presumption that modernization of procedures would result in enhanced efficiency. One problem was whether the Department would maintain effective centralized services. H0 is dependent on such services in many areas, notably contracting, records management, declassification, personnel, equipment procurement, and editing.

2. Declassification. The Office must contend with two related problems. How could it obtain expeditious responses to requests for declassification from the Department and from other agencies? How could it obtain favorable responses? Members of H0 explained the process to be followed in appealing negative decisions. In response to inquiries from members of the Committee, explanations were given concerning (a) appellate jurisdictions in the event of negative decisions; (b) guidelines for decisions concerning declassification; (c) unofficial disclosures as basis for official declassification; (d) expedients to be adopted in the event of unsuccessful denials, e.g., summaries and disclaimers; (e) possibility of preparing "sweeper" volumes to include material declassified after publication of the volume for which it was originally selected.

3. Chairman for 1980. The Advisory Committee elected Dr. Graebner as its chairperson for the coming year.

OTHER ACTIVITY

The Committee attended a luncheon in the Department of State for which Mrs. Lucia Wilson Benson, the Under Secretary for Security Assistance, Science and Technology, served as hostess.

The Committee met by itself during the afternoon of November 9 to discuss the contents of its annual report.