

All Mission Personnel

DCM - Joseph E. Hayes 

TELEGRAM PREPARATION AND  
APPROVAL

AR - 03 Revised  
February 1, 1990

The Department of State's Telecommunications Center uses an Automated Message Analysis and Dissemination System (AMADS), which requires strict adherence to prescribed formats.

Style and Accuracy

Write clearly. Lengthy telegrams should always begin with a **summary** which highlights the principal points of the message, including any recommendations. If action is requested, make that clear up front. Avoid excessive use of acronyms, and spell out all but the most common acronyms at the instance of first usage. Please do not use "ASAP" when requesting action.

It is the responsibility of each drafting and clearing officer to ensure, before their initials are appended, that the message is accurate, that typographical errors have been caught and corrected, etc. Too many cables continue to reach the Front Office with careless errors or omissions. Common problems other than typographical errors, include referring to a reftel without having listed it, omission of an obvious addressee, failure to list distribution, omission of a subject line, inconsistent classification labeling, careless selection of TAGS, or a "summary" which does not summarize.

When proofreading a cable, one thing to look for is incomplete characters. The Optical Reader only reads what it sees. If your printer or typewriter consistently prints only partial characters, it must be serviced.

Submission to the Front Office

Except as noted below, telegrams are to be sent to the Front Office for review by the DCM and Ambassador prior to transmission. After DCM clearance, the Ambassador will normally be the final approving authority for all policy, program, and reporting messages.

Copies of cited reftels to which a response is being given or which are pertinent to the understanding of the outgoing message should be attached.

Major substantive messages and policy proposals should always first be submitted to the Front Office in draft. If there is an urgency, final typing can be done in the Front Office. Officers are invited to arrange to discuss policy/program messages with the Ambassador in person at an early stage of preparation.

#### Clearances

All pertinent clearances should be obtained and listed prior to submission for final approval. If cleared in draft, the responsible action officer who can verify the clearances must initial beside the listed clearing officers' names on the final message. A cable which is not so initialed will be presumed to not have been cleared yet, regardless of what is typed on the form. Clearances should be shown by the office symbol. **The DCM is normally the final clearing officer.**

If there are **differences of view** which are not easily and quickly resolved, a clearing officer is encouraged to attach a note explaining the additional or different views to be considered, and forward the telegram without delay.

It is the **responsibility of the action officer** to ensure timely clearance and dispatch of a telegram. A **time-sensitive telegram should not be put in the routing system** - walk it through to ensure speedy clearances.

#### Approval

The approving officer will normally be either the Ambassador or DCM for cables of record.

AIDAC, TOPEC, DAO, and MLO messages may be "approved" by their respective agency heads but should, except as noted below, be sent to the Front Office for final clearance by the DCM and the Ambassador prior to transmission.

The following messages do not require submission to the Front Office for clearances **unless the contents are clearly of special interest to the DCM or the Ambassador.**

1. ADMIN routine (i.e. payroll, T&A, etc.) - Administrative Officer;
2. Consular routine (not Congressionals) - Head of Consular Section;
3. ADM AID and commercial telexes - AID Representative;

4. TOPEC Administrative and Medical - Peace Corp Director;
5. VOA Administrative - VOA Station Manager;
6. MLO Administrative - Officer in Charge;
7. DAO Administrative - DATT

The exceptions noted above may be appropriately initialed and sent directly to CPU for transmission, but the Ambassador and DCM should be noted on the distribution.

In an emergency, any agency head, section chief, or the Mission duty officer may give final authorization for the dispatch of a message without prior approval of the Ambassador or DCM. However, in such instances, a reasonable effort will have been made to contact the Ambassador or the DCM by phone. The authorizing officer is expected to brief them on the outgoing message as soon as possible.

Final approval for dispatch will be indicated by initialling below the signature line at the end of the cable. In order not to confuse the optical character reader, the approving initials must be at least five lines below the last line of the text. Please initial to the lower right.

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TELEGRAM PREPARATION  
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Cable Forms

Cables shall be typed single spaced on Optional Form 191 (first page) and Optional Form 191A (succeeding pages). Examples are attached. Double space between paragraphs.

Type on top of the pink lettering, beginning at the left-hand margin. For example, where it reads "classification," type the actual classification immediately over the lettering.

When you reach the "Clearance" line and you have more than one person's initials and name, use only the symbols of the section(s). For example:

**CPU ADM DCM**

The optical reader for the Intelligent Message Handler (IMH) will only read 15 characters on the clearance line. Additional characters automatically will be dropped.

If there is not enough space on the "Clearance" line, you should type the additional symbols at the bottom of the page below the pink margin.

Do not type the cable's classification on the bottom right-hand portion of the page where it lists "classification." Our communications equipment is not programmed to adjust for the space between the last typed character of the text and the classification at the bottom of the page.

Do type the classification at the top of each page.

When you reach the "Originator" line, your typing of "AMEMBASSY BELIZE" will not exactly line up with the pink lettering on the cable form. Do not adjust your typewriter to line up your typing with the printing on the form. Simply hit the carriage return twice after the last character is typed on the "Distribution" line to space to the "Originator" line.

#### AMADS Telegram Format Requirements

Special handling instructions, captions, and attention indicators, along with TAGS (for STATE), terms, and subject line information should be properly placed on the OCR forms.

In using the prescribed format, please pay particular attention to the following areas:

#### 1. Captions Area

The first caption line must appear two spaces below the addressee line. Subsequent captions, attention indicators, or passing instructions must appear two spaces below the previous caption. Certain captions receive a set distribution and should be used only under the circumstances described in 5 FAM.

Examples: PER CHANNEL, OC CHANNEL, IG CHANNEL, etc.

#### 2. Attention Indicators

These indicators (i.e. State for INM, Guatemala for RSO, etc.) should be followed by the desired office symbol and follow each other across the page. The office symbol may be followed by the individual's name for whom the attention indicator is intended. Under no circumstances should an attention indicator be directed to an individual unless preceded by an office symbol.

Example: STATE FOR M/COMP/FO - JOHN JONES

3. Restricted Distribution

On "only" telegrams, the attention indicator "for" should be followed by the office symbol, the word "only," and the name of the individual to whom the telegram is directed.

Example: **FOR ARA/EX ONLY - JANE SMITH**

Where attention indicators direct the telegram to more than one office (i.e. ARA/EX, A/FBO, M/COMP), the AMADS will select the first office in list order for action.

4. TAGS Line

Subject TAGS are required on all telegrams except those captioned AIDAC, ADM AID, USIA or TOPEC. These TAGS should properly represent the subject content of the telegram. When multiple TAGS are required, those which represent the dominant subject content should be placed in the first portion on the TAGS line.

Example: **TAGS: SNAR, MARR, BH, GT**

5. Subject Line

With the exception of "Official-Informal" telegrams, the use of subject terms is helpful in the accurate distribution of the telegram.

Example: **SUBJECT: TELEGRAM FORMAT - AMADS FORMAT REQUIREMENTS**

Attention to the above points will ensure accurate and expeditious dissemination in the Department.

Typing Cable Texts

The optical reader will not recognize a paragraph break at the foot of the page. In order to create a space between paragraphs when typing additional pages, type one dash at the top of the succeeding page, below the pink margin. Then single space, and begin typing the remaining text.

Use a 10-pitch Courier element in upper case instead of the OCR-B element. This will eliminate the need to switch the typewriter or computer print wheels back and forth between the two elements.

Your typed cable pages should be limited to using less than 60 percent of the page length within the designated borders. Since any correction or change requires retyping an entire page, it is far better to distribute the text over several pages than to present full single-spaced pages for clearance and approval. Type a maximum of two to three paragraphs (depending on size) per page, particularly if the cable was not typed on a word processor. Making a change or correction will then not require retyping a long text, and decreases the chance of making new errors in the text which is correct.

At the end of the text, type the last name of the Chief of Mission, followed by a double cross hatch (##), i.e. RICH##, or when there is a Charge d'Affaires a.i., HAYES##

#### Distribution

Drafting and approving officers should always note desired local distribution. Distribution will also be reviewed by the Front Office before dispatch. Frequent omissions noted include failure of AID and ECON to cross-distribute telegrams reporting relevant economic or investment information, and failure of DAO and MLO to indicate cross-distribution where relevant.

When listing office symbols for distribution, list the office which will get the original copy first.

Examples: DAO AMB DCM  
(or) POL AMB DCM

For POL/J, do not use a slant bar. Also, a comma must follow every third office symbol.

Example: DAO AMB DCM, POLJ

#### Corrections

Type-over erasures may be made as long as the page has not been removed from the typewriter. If attempted after the page has been removed, it will probably introduce a garble into the text.

Asterisks (\*) may be used at times to introduce a change or correction. Asterisks delete preceding text, as follows:

\* Deletes previous single character  
\*\* Deletes previous word  
\*\*\* Deletes entire previous line

Because of the difficulty of making changes, remember to utilize the "short page" technique described earlier.

This instruction supercedes AR-03 dated February 28, 1989

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM

TEL 203 r1se

UNCLASSIFIED  
PROG 01/01/99  
AMB:RGRICH  
ECON:AJUNIOR  
POL ADM DAO, AID  
ECON AMB DCM, AID CPU POL, POLJ  
ORIGINATOR  
AMEMBASSY BELIZE  
SECSTATE WASHDC, PRECEDENCE  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC, PRECEDENCE  
  
SCI FI CHANNEL  
  
STATE FOR PM/SF - ISAAC ASIMOV  
SECDEF FOR AF/ABC ONLY - FLYING SAUCER STUDY GROUP  
  
E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: MARR, SNAR, BH, GT  
SUBJECT: ATTACK OF THE VENUTIANS IN BELIZE  
REF: A) 89 BELIZE 123, B) STATE 123456, C) GUATEMALA 987

1. CLASSIFICATION - ENTIRE TEXT  
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2. SUMMARY - THIS IS AN ACTION CABLE (SEE PARA 6).  
WHILE NOT ENTIRELY NECESSARY, PLACING HYPHENS BETWEEN  
PARAGRAPHS CAN SAVE PROBLEMS WITH PAGINATION ON THE  
RECEIVING END. - END SUMMARY  
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INITIALS  
AUTH:AMB

DRA: ECON

1. CI: POL

2. ADM

3. DAO

4. AID

5. DCM

3. THE CABLE SHOULD BE TYPED COMPLETELY IN UPPER CASE USING COURIER 10 PITCH OR THE OCR-B CHARACTER SET.

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4. TO DELETE A CHARACTER SIMPLY TYPE ONE ASTERISK IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CHARACTER\* (NO SPACE). TO DELETE A WORD TYPE TWO ASTERISKS\*\*, AND TO DELETE A WHOLE LINE TYPE THREE ASTERISKS AT THE END OF THE LINE\*\*\*.

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5. PAGE LENGTH SHOULD BE KEPT SHORT AND IN NO CASE SHOULD IT EXCEED 45 LINES.

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ACTION REQUESTED

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6. IF IT IS AN ACTION CABLE PLEASE CAPTION THE PARAGRAPH WHICH CONTAINS THE SPECIFIC REQUEST. DON'T BURY THE REQUEST IN MID-PARAGRAPH.  
RICH##

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