

and capacity to carry these out as well, on request. Further, the limitation of the Central Agency to dealing with general purpose information is made explicit in order to recognize the variety of operating needs for gathering and processing information of the several branches of Government, which they must be in a position to meet directly in order to carry out these tasks.

b. Receiving and integrating into its general information stock, data which are the by-product of administrative operations of the other Federal Agencies. In this connection, the Central Agency would, through liaison with the other agencies, help to design tax, regulatory, social insurance, and other report forms in such a way as to produce the maximum information consistent with reasonable burdens on respondents.

c. Developing and maintaining appropriate standards of confidentiality in the release of any data, as determined by law, using the basic data within the bounds of these standards so as to minimize the loss of analytically useful information, while at the same time ensuring protection to the privacy and identity of individual reporters.

d. Coordinating its activities to the greatest possible extent with those of the information collecting of states, cities, and other governmental units so as to arrange as far as possible a rational division of labor, a maximum integration of information, and a free flow of useful information in both directions.

e. Organizing and storing information in such a way as to provide maximum legitimate accessibility, for both governmental agencies and other users.

f. Providing computing, tabulating, and analytical capacity for all government users. Insofar as it proves economical, these facilities could be drawn on by other agencies for any special computations, analytical studies, etc. In other words, the Agency should maintain the central general-purpose large-scale data-processing center for general Government needs. Non-confidential data from the Center in standard documentary or machine-readable form should also be available, on a suitable compensatory basis, for the research uses of academic and other private groups, when such use serves a public purpose.

Neither this function, nor that of *e.* above is intended to preclude other agencies from maintaining independent computing facilities and independent analytical capabilities of an appropriate sort. In particular, it is obvious that every policy agency, as well as many administrative units, will require analytical capabilities for program planning and program evaluation. But current technologies, including distant consoles connected with a central computer facility by telephone links, make compatible decentralized use of data for analytical purposes, with highly centralized data storage and processing.

g. Studying methods of improving the protection of individual privacy and the confidentiality of data while at the same time providing use of it for legitimate analyses. Both the screening of analyses before release, and the camouflage of the basic data itself offer promising paths for exploration.

h. Improving methods of data collection, techniques of sampling, and opportunities for maximum use of by-product information, both for economy's sake, and to minimize the burdens on respondents of increasing demands for information.

i. In cooperation with the analysts who use the data, both within and without the government, defining and refining the standards and bases on which information is collected, and determining the probable development of information needs.

j. Improving the techniques of data handling, storage, and computation, in cooperation with appropriate technologically competent public and private agencies.

k. Securing the research and development contributions of university, business and other groups to the effectiveness of all these functions. This can be done both by making grants and contracts and by providing facilities and capacity which such research personnel could use on a variety of financial bases. Outside research and development assistance might usefully cover the whole range from long-term basic research to assistance in the solution of an immediate problem.

The Committee is not starting with a clean slate. Realistically, the question before us is how to proceed from the present situation of too much decentralization and insufficient coordination. We have not attempted to judge either the wisdom or the feasibility of attempting to create, at one blow, the kind of Central Statistical Agency we have described above. Rather we have sought to make a step, of sufficient magnitude to inject a genuinely needed new element into the system to help it adapt more rapidly to the growing problems it faces. Following this step we envisage further adaptive evolution in the direction of a stronger and more centralized system by an experimental process.