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July 23, 1951

Comments on SCAG

These remarks are offered in conformity with a suggestion made by Captain Harper during the SCAG meeting of 10-12 July.

It appears reasonable to hope that SCAG may render assistance in the following ways:

1. By suggestions as to general plans of attack on the principal problem presented to us. This would imply an increased familiarity, on the part of most SCAG members, with the methods followed to date by AFSA personnel and with their expected future procedures. Such familiarity could best be acquired by individual conferences, preferably during visits to Washington, between now and the September meeting. On the basis of information thus obtained, and perhaps of informal discussions among those SCAG members who find opportunity, the September meeting should produce some concrete opinions as to
 - a. Possible new mathematical attacks on the problem or possible modifications in existing methods. One such suggestion was briefly made by Dr. Tompkins at the meeting on 12 June and was amplified by him during a visit to Arlington Hall the next day. It might be well to explore this suggestion without waiting for another SCAG meeting.
 - b. A desirable order of events in carrying out successive stages leading toward a general solution. It was clear that there is no wide-spread conviction as to the most efficient program. The members of SCAG may be able to offer encouraging suggestions to those who have carried on this frustrating task.
 - c. Electronic equipment or computational techniques whereby the expected time required to carry through a com

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can be significantly shortened.

2. By advising members of the related RDB Panel (on Security Communications Equipment), who are also members of SCAG, regarding matters of concern to the Panel. For the writer, as a Panel member, the SCAG meetings have thus far shed considerable light on the urgency of certain types of equipment and on relative priorities attached to various parts of the AFSA program.

3. Possibly by suggesting additional personnel for SCAG, though the writer believes this should be done sparingly. Even in the critically important field of probability and statistics, it appears doubtful that a specialist should be added at present, unless one could be found with an unusual breadth of view and depth of training in mathematics as well as applied statistics. There is an excellent supply of talent in this area, as well as in other essential mathematical fields, among the AFSA personnel. Furthermore, some members of SCAG are familiar with the most relevant statistical techniques, an appreciation for which seems to depend rather on an understanding of the particular problems at stake than on being expert in other forms of statistical endeavor. If the rest of the group should, however, feel the need for a new SCAG member in this area, the names of Fred Mosteller (Harvard) and S. S. Wilks (Princeton) might be considered.

4. Possibly by direct and specific contributions to the electronic and mathematical problems of AFSA. This clearly depends on some bright ideas occurring to SCAG members; a possibility which would be enhanced

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under the stimulus of consultations between them and the AFSA experts who have lived with these problems.

As a general comment, the undersigned feels that the SCAG sessions have been well-conceived and well-executed. Insofar as the project holds promise of success, and the writer is inclined to optimism, a good start has been made.

/s/Stewart S. Cairns

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