

Guide to the
Scholarly Resources Microfilm Edition of

**RECORDS OF THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RELATING TO
POLITICAL RELATIONS
OF LATIN AMERICA AND
CARIBBEAN STATES
1930-1944**

Department of State Decimal Files 712.13 – 738.39

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Guide to the
SR Microfilm Edition of
RECORDS OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
RELATING TO POLITICAL RELATIONS
OF LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN STATES, 1930-1944

Scholarly Resources has published on microfilm the U.S. Department of State Decimal Files of records relating to political relations of Latin America and Caribbean states for the years 1930-1939 and 1940-1944.

The materials in these Decimal Files have been microfilmed in the exact order and condition in which they are found in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration. Those documents that have not yet been declassified were removed prior to filming and have been replaced with notes indicating their absence.

The documents found in these files are predominantly instructions to and despatches from diplomatic and consular officials and are often accompanied by enclosures. Notes between the Department of State and foreign diplomats in the United States, memoranda prepared by State Department officials, and correspondence with officials of other government departments and with private businesses and persons are also included.

These Decimal Files are part of the General Records of the Department of State, National Archives Record Group 59.

ABOUT THE DECIMAL FILING SYSTEM

From 1910 to 1963, the State Department used a decimal filing system to organize its central files, which consequently became known as the "Decimal Files." This filing system is designed to permit access to the documents by subject. It uses a numerical-subject organization that has three major parts: Class, Country, and Subject.

Class. Until 1950, there were nine numbered classes in the decimal filing system, each of which designated a very broad subject area. These are:

- Class 0: General, Miscellaneous
- Class 1: Administration, U.S. Government
- Class 2: Extradition
- Class 3: Protection of Interests
- Class 4: Claims
- Class 5: International Conferences, Multilateral Treaties, Disarmament, League of Nations, and Interparliamentary Union
- Class 6: Commerce, Customs Administration, and Trade Agreements
- Class 7: Political Relations of States
- Class 8: Internal Affairs of States

The records reproduced in this publication are from Class 7, Political Relations of States.

Country. The decimal filing system continues by assigning a number to each country, as well as some larger geographic areas. The files are arranged in such a manner that material referring to political relations between two states appears in the file of the country with the lower country number. Hence, material concerning relations between Ecuador (22) and Mexico (12) would appear in the Mexican file, but information regarding Ecuador's relations with Venezuela (31) would be found in the Ecuadoran file. (A list of country numbers for the Latin American and Caribbean nations can be found on page ix of this guide.)

Subject. Class 7 is organized according to a subject classification system, in which each subject is assigned a number. The numerical-subject classification for the classes of records begins on page 1 of this Guide.

File Periodization

The State Department divided its Decimal Files into arbitrary sections by date: 1910-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1944, 1945-1949, 1950-1954, 1955-1959, and 1960-1963. Each section is treated as a separate filing unit, organized by the numerical-subject classification system. Within each section, therefore, all the documents pertaining to a particular subject are filed together. It is important for researchers to remember that the Decimal Files are organized in these multiyear sections and cannot be accessed by individual years.

Document File Numbers

In the decimal filing system, each document is assigned a file number that reflects four pieces of information. An example, using a document in Decimal File 712.15, is shown below:

7 12 . 15 2 / 13
(1) (2) (2) (3) (4)

(1) Class Number. This document is part of Class 7, pertaining to political relations of states.

(2) Country Number. Each document includes two country numbers indicating the two countries between which the relationship exists. In this document, number 12 indicates Mexico, and number 15 signifies Honduras.

(3) Subject Number. The number following the second country number refers to the subject of the document. (The numerical-subject classification of Class 7 begins on page 1 of this Guide.) In this example, the number 2 denotes that the topic of the document involves matters of commerce and navigation.

(4) Document Number. From 1910 until July 1944, the number following the slant (/) indicated the sequence number of the document in the particular file; in the example above, this would be the thirteenth document in the sequence of documents on the sub-

ject of commerce and navigation in the particular period. From July 1944 on, the document number reflects the date of the document's creation. For example, a document dated November 20, 1944, would be numbered 11-2044. This numbering system is also used for documents that were created before July 1944 but not filed until after that date.

List of Papers and Purport Cards

The State Department prepared a List of Papers, or purport list, for each Decimal File up to July 1944. This list records the documents in the order in which they appear in the file. For each document, the List of Papers provides the document number, the place of origin and often the author, the date of origin, an abstract of the contents, and other relevant information. Beginning in July 1944, the State Department changed to recording the same general information for each document on individual Purport Cards.

In this microfilm publication, the List of Papers or the Purport Cards corresponding to the documents on each roll of microfilm are included at the beginning of the roll. This serves as a convenient roll "table of contents." Researchers should note, however, that there are occasional discrepancies between what is listed and what actually appears in the file.

USING THE MICROFILM

At the beginning of the first microfilm roll for each country or group of countries, the researcher will find the following:

- The numerical-subject classification of Class 7
- The roll contents
- The List of Papers or Purport Cards relevant to the documents on that particular roll

On each subsequent microfilm roll for countries whose file covers more than one roll of film, only the relevant section of the List of Papers or Purport Cards appears.

Locating a Document by File Number

When you know the country and file number of a document and wish to locate it on the microfilm, follow these steps:

- (1) Go to the microfilm Roll Contents for the appropriate country and section, either in this Guide or at the beginning of Roll 1 of the microfilm. The Roll Contents gives the file number of the first and last document on each roll. Using this information, determine the appropriate roll.
- (2) Place this roll on the microfilm reader. Remembering that the documents are filed in numerical order, turn to the desired document.

Locating a Document by Subject

When you want to examine documents addressing a particular country or subject, follow these steps:

- (1) Check the country-number list, found on page ix, and the subject index, located on page 3, to determine the country and file number.
- (2) Check the appropriate microfilm Roll Contents to determine the roll or rolls of film on which documents with this country and file number appear.
- (3) Place the appropriate roll of film on the reader, turn to the List of Documents or Purport Cards, if available, at the beginning, and scan the abstracts for documents with this file number. Note the document numbers of any that seem promising.
- (4) Turn in the roll of film to the material that you wish to examine.

CITATION OF DOCUMENTS

A general form for citing documents from the Decimal File is:

[Sender] to [recipient], [date], Department of State, Decimal File 7[12].[15], General Records, Record Group 59, National Archives, Washington, DC.

COUNTRY NUMBERS

The Argentine Republic	35	Guatemala	14
Bolivia	24	Haiti	38
Brazil	32	Honduras	15
Central America	13	Mexico	12
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NUMERICAL-SUBJECT LISTING OF DOCUMENTS
IN CLASS 7 RECORDS
1930-1949

- 700 Political relations of states

- 701 Diplomatic representation (diplomatic privileges, immunities, etc.)
 - .01 Right of residence, transit, etc.
 - .02 Protection of person, dwelling, etc.
 - .03 Freedom of communication and inviolability of correspondence
 - .04 Confinement of correspondence to official channels
 - .05 Exemption from judicial process
 - .06 Exemption from taxation
 - .07 Duty to observe police regulations
 - .08 Abstention from politics
 - .09 Other privileges, immunities, etc.
 - ** Diplomatic service of country **
 - .**†† Diplomatic representation of country ** in country ††
 - .00†† Diplomatic corps in country ††

- 702 Consular representation (consular privileges, immunities, etc.)
 - .01 Right of residence, transit, etc.
 - .02 Protection of person, dwelling, etc.
 - .03 Freedom of communication and inviolability of correspondence
 - .04 Free exercise of functions
 - .05 Amenability to judicial process
 - .06 Amenability to taxation
 - .07 Amenability to police regulations
 - .08 Abstention from politics
 - .09 Other privileges, immunities, etc.
 - ** Consular service of country
 - .**†† Consular representation of country ** in country ††
 - .00†† Consular body residing in country ††

- 703.**†† Representation of interests of United States by diplomatic and consular officers of country ** in country ††

- 704.**†† Representation of interests of country ** by American diplomatic and consular officers in country ††

- 705.**†† Representation in the United States of interests of country ** by diplomatic and consular officers of country ††

- 706.**†† Representation in foreign countries of interests of country ** by diplomatic and consular officers of country ††

- 707.**†† Relations of diplomatic and consular officers of country ** with diplomatic and consular officers of country ††

- 710 Relations of American states
 - International conferences of American states
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 - 710.B Mexico, 1902
 - 710.C Rio, 1906
 - 710.D Buenos Aires, 1910
 - 710.E Santiago, 1923
 - 710.F Habana, 1928
 - 710.G Montevideo, 1933
 - 710.H Lima, 1938
 - .001 Pan American Union
 - .11 Relations of United States with other American states
- 713 Relations of Central American states
 - .001 Central American Court of Justice at Cartago
- 7**.*†† Relations; bilateral treaties
 - .††0 General
 - .††01 International law, diplomacy
 - .††1 Political
 - .††11 War, peace, friendship, alliance, nonaggression
 - .††111 Neutrality
 - .††112 Neutral commerce (freedom of the seas, civil warfare, contraband of war, blockade, trading with the enemy)
 - .††112a United States list of contraband and trading with the enemy list
 - .††113 Enemy property
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 - .††114a United States prisoners of war
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 - .††117 Hospital ships
 - .††118 Military observers, civilian observers
 - .††119 Termination of war (mediation, armistice)
 - .††12 Arbitration, Conciliation, Kellogg Antiwar Pact
 - .††13 Limitation of armaments
 - .††14 Cession of territory, disputed sovereignty over noncontiguous territory
 - .††15 Boundary questions, composition of differences
 - .††151 Delimitation of boundary
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 - .††153 Appropriations, their disbursement
 - .††154 Supplies, facilities
 - .††155 Boundary waters (pollution)
 - .††156 Navigation (ferries)
 - .††157 Improvement of navigation (bridges, removal of obstructions)
 - .††158 Boundary fences
 - .††16 Diversion of boundary waters
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