



governmentattic.org

"Rummaging in the government's attic"

Description of document: Department of State Style Manual, 2013

Request date: 20-June-2014

Released date: 27-June-2014

Posted date: 14-July-2014

Source of document: Freedom of Information Act request
Office of Information Programs and Services
A/GIS/IPS/RL
U. S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20522-8100
Fax: (202) 261-8579
[Electronic FOIA Request Submission](#)

The governmentattic.org web site ("the site") is noncommercial and free to the public. The site and materials made available on the site, such as this file, are for reference only. The governmentattic.org web site and its principals have made every effort to make this information as complete and as accurate as possible, however, there may be mistakes and omissions, both typographical and in content. The governmentattic.org web site and its principals shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information provided on the governmentattic.org web site or in this file. The public records published on the site were obtained from government agencies using proper legal channels. Each document is identified as to the source. Any concerns about the contents of the site should be directed to the agency originating the document in question. GovernmentAttic.org is not responsible for the contents of documents published on the website.



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

JUN 27 2014

Dear Requester:

RE: Records regarding the State Department Style Manual

This is in response to your request dated 6-20-14. We have assigned Case Control Number F-2014-10783 to your request.

Based on our review of your correspondence, we have determined that we cannot process your request for the following reason(s):

- You have not reasonably described the records you seek in a way that someone familiar with Department records and programs could locate them.
- You have not provided identifying information (such as your date and/or place of birth, or the date and/or place of birth for all parties associated with your request; citizenship status for all parties associated with your request).
- You have not provided proof of your identity (see attached information sheet pertaining to certification of identity).
- Some or all of the records you have requested do not appear to be State Department records (other agency information may be enclosed).
- The records you seek are in the public domain.
- Your request is not dated.
- You have submitted your identifying information on forms that were not issued by the State Department, which we do not accept.
- You have not agreed to pay the fees associated with the processing of your request.
- Your request is not a FOIA Request.
- Your request was not submitted in English.

Accordingly, your request is invalid and your case has been closed.

- Please see the enclosed information sheet pertaining to access to third party information.
- Please see the enclosed information sheet pertaining to custodial verification.

Should you want to contact us, you may call our FOIA Requester Service Center on (202) 261-8484 or send an email to FOIAstatus@state.gov. If you want information concerning how to file a request, please refer to the Information Access Guide which is available at www.foia.state.gov. Please refer to the Case Control Number in any communication.

 Sincerely,
Requester Communications Branch
Office of Information Programs & Services

Office of Information Programs and Services
U.S. Department of State, SA-2
Washington, DC 20522-8100
Website: www.foia.state.gov

Inquiries:
Phone: 1-202-261-8484
FAX: 1-202-261-8579
E-mail: FOIAstatus@state.gov

Please note that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) does not require agencies to provide information that is available in the public domain, nor are they required to answer questions posed as FOIA requests. For your reference, this is covered on our website at www.foia.state.gov.

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT STAFF STYLE GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Ctrl+Click on the section title to go directly to that section.)

I.	<u>Acronyms</u>	p. 2
II.	<u>Specific Terms</u>	p. 3
	- <u>Bureau of African Affairs (AF)</u>	p. 3
	- <u>Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)</u>	p. 4
	- <u>Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR)</u>	p. 6
	- <u>Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA)</u>	p. 7
	- <u>Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA)</u>	p. 9
	- <u>Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)</u>	p. 9
	- <u>General Terms</u>	p. 10
III.	<u>Miscellaneous Grammar/Formatting</u>	p. 16
IV.	<u>Correspondence Guidance</u>	p. 20
	- <u>Guidelines for Correspondence for Secretary Kerry</u>	p. 20
	- <u>Guidelines for Correspondence for Other Principals</u>	p. 21

THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT STAFF STYLE GUIDE

This style guide serves as a reference for Department officials writing for Seventh Floor principals. The first section pertains to acronyms, the second section lists specific terms (both by regional bureau and generally), the third section contains preferred grammatical rules and guidance, and the final section pertains to correspondence. Happy writing!

I. Acronyms:

As a general rule, acronyms must be spelled out on first reference. Exceptions are listed below.

Acronyms that do NOT need to be spelled out on first reference:

- APEC
 - ASEAN
 - AU
 - CARICOM
 - CIA
 - COM, DCM
 - DHS
 - DoD
 - DOJ
 - E.O.
 - EU
 - GDP
 - GNP
 - IMF
 - ISAF
 - LGBT
 - MP
 - NATO
 - NGO
 - NSA
 - NSC/NSS
 - OAS
 - ODNI, DNI
 - OSCE
 - PM, FM, etc., when used with a name (e.g., FM Kouchner)
 - PRT
 - UK
 - UN (United Nations is preferred when used as a noun)
 - UNESCO
 - UNGA
 - UNSCR
 - UNSC
 - USAID
 - USTR
 - WFP
 - WTO
-
- State Department bureaus and offices (e.g., IO, OES, PRM). Do not, however, use S, D, D-MR, P, M, J, etc. Spell out the titles and names of principals.

- Spell out Assistant Secretary, Under Secretary, Ambassador, Senator, etc., except when used in a list (e.g., for appointment requests). See “capitalization” section for rules on capitalization of titles for Department officials.

Acronyms that DO need to be spelled out on first reference:

- Uncommon UN missions and agencies (e.g., UNIFIL, HRC)
- Names of terrorist groups (e.g., al-Qa’ida, not AQ)
- FAV, IED, UAV, OMLT, and other military-related technical terms
- ADB, WB, IFIs, and other international financial institutions (except IMF, which is commonly used)

Note: As a general rule, do not use acronyms in call sheets, as these are points that may be read verbatim, and acronyms are not conversational. Also, please avoid use of acronyms in letters sent by principals.

II. Specific Terms

(Consult CIA’s Chiefs of State Directory for spellings of countries and government officials that do not appear below. Consult CIA’s World Factbook for adjectival forms of country names. Both can be accessed on the classified side at <http://www.cia.sgov.gov>.)

Bureau of African Affairs

AQIM: Spell out “al Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb” on first reference.

African Development Bank: AFDB, spell out on first reference.

AFISMA: Spell out on first reference “African-led International Support Mission to Mali”

AMISOM: Spell out on first reference “African Union Mission in Somalia.”

African Union: AU acceptable on first reference if context is clear.

al-Bashir (Sudan)

al-Shabaab

Congo: The official long forms are *the Democratic Republic of the Congo* and *the Republic of Congo*; official short forms are *Congo (Kinshasa)* and *Congo (Brazzaville)*, respectively. *DRC* on second reference for Congo (Kinshasa) is acceptable.

Cote d'Ivoire: Not *Ivory Coast*.

ECOWAS: Spell out on first reference "Economic Community of West African States."

Jingaweit: Preferred spelling for Arab-based militias in Sudan, not *Jinjaweed*.

Lord's Resistance Army: Spell out. Can use LRA on the second reference.

SADC: Spell out on first reference "Southern African Development Community."

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

AIT Taipei: Use in all references to the U.S. office in Taiwan. Do not say *embassy*. If spelled out, use the full name "American Institute in Taiwan." (Note: There is an AIT in Washington [AIT/W], which is headed by a chairman; in Taipei [AIT/T], which is headed by a director; and in Kaohsiung [AIT/K].)

Asian Development Bank: ADB, do not/not use "AsDB"; spell out on first reference.

Aung San Suu Kyi: Spell out full name. Abbreviation *ASSK* acceptable on second reference. Do not/not refer to her as "Suu Kyi."

Burma Not *Myanmar* unless speaking with members of the Burmese government.

Cheonan: Vessel's name in italics.

Chinese names: The surname comes first (the same is true for Korean names), followed by the given name in the style of the territory of origin: for Taiwan, two-syllable given names should be hyphenated; for the PRC two-syllable given names should be joined. Examples: Lee Teng-hui, Soong Chu-yi, Ma Ying-jeou (Taiwan) – Lee, Soong, or Ma on second reference; Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin (PRC) – Mao, Deng, Jiang on second reference. Two-syllable surnames (e.g., Ouyang in PRC or Ooyang in Taiwan, Linghu, etc.) are always joined names. If the surname and given name are both monosyllabic, then the two names should be separated, with the surname first, followed by given name, e.g.,

Lien Chan, Li Peng – Lien and Li on second reference.

Diet: Japanese parliament.
Capitalize *D*.

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: Use DPRK on second reference or North Korea.

Filipino: One *l*, one *p*. Note difference in spelling from *Philippines*. (If female, Filipina.)

Futenma: Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma. Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF).

Jemaah Islamiyah

Kim Jong-il & Kim Il-sung: Former DPRK leaders.

Kim Jong Un: Current DPRK leader.

Korea: Use Republic of Korea, with ROK or South Korea on second reference. Or use Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, DPRK, on second reference or North Korea.

North Korea: Use Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, with DPRK or North Korea on second reference.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front: Philippine rebel group. Avoid “MILF” acronym.

Myanmar: Do not write unless quoting someone or speaking with members of the Burmese government. Use Burma.

People’s Republic of China: When contrasting with Taiwan, can use PRC (spell out on first reference), but generally use “China.”

Republic of China: Never use in reference to Taiwan (unless in a historical context). See *Taiwan*.

Republic of Korea: Use on first reference; ROK or South Korea on second reference.

Six-Party Talks

Taiwan: Do not use *Taiwanese* except when quoting someone. Use “Taiwan” instead, such as “a Taiwan newspaper” or “a Taiwan writer.” When referring to the people of Taiwan collectively, use “the people on Taiwan,” or “the people of Taiwan.” Write *Taiwan authorities*, not *Taiwan government*. Do not write *Republic of China*.

Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs

Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and South Ossetia: References should indicate these entities are unrecognized, e.g., the de facto president of Abkhazia, or the “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic,” with quotation marks.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: May be abbreviated as BiH or Bosnia on second use.

Chechnya

Chornobyl

Czech Republic: Generally there should be no “the.” Use “the” only when preceding an official title, for example, “the president of the Czech Republic.”

Dervish Eroglu: Should be referred to as leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, not/not president (references to the unrecognized “Turkish Republic of North Cyprus” should be in quotation marks, including “TRNC,” “president,” “parliament,” etc.).

Duma: Russian parliament, with a capital *D*.

ETA: Basque terrorist group “Fatherland and Liberty.” Not “the ETA” (like the IRA, PLO).

euro, euro area, eurozone: Not capitalized.

European Commission: Capitalize. Spell out on first reference.

European External Action Service: Capitalize. Spell out on first reference.

European Parliament: Capitalize. Spell out on first reference.

EU/European Union: No need to spell out on first reference.

FCO: Use Foreign and Commonwealth Office on first reference.

Georgia: Official name is “Georgia,” not “Republic of Georgia.”

The Hague: Always write with *The*. The *T* is always capitalized.

Labour /Labour Party: Use British spelling (with “u”).

NATO: No need to spell out on first reference. Then the Alliance and Allies (capitalized).

Republika Srpska

Saakashvili, Mikheil

Slovak: “Slovakian” is never used, and Slovak is both the adjective and noun used for the people and language of Slovakia.

Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot: No hyphens in either noun or adjective form.

Transnistria: (not Transdniestria, as used by the OSCE and some others) – the unrecognized, separatist region of Moldova. Titles of officials from the regions should be placed in quotation marks, i.e., Transnistrian “president” Shevchuk.

Ukraine: No “The.” Also, Kyiv, not Kiev.

Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

Abbas, President: Do not use “Abu Mazen.”

al-Jazeera
al-Kabir

Abdullah, King: King of Jordan. No first name.

al-Keib

Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan: On second reference, *al Nahyan*, not ABZ.

al-Mahdi

al-Qa’ida

Abu Ghraib prison

al-Zawahiri

al-Attiya, Dr. Khalid bin Mohammed

Allawi: This is his preferred spelling. First name is Ayad.

al-Faisal: see Saud al-Faisal

Ahmadinejad

al-XXX: Names with *al* are written *al-XXX*. Example: *al-Jazeera television*.

Asad: President Bashar Asad, of Syria. Not al-Asad.

al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade

Arab Awakening: Not *Arab Spring*.

al-Hashimi

Basrah: With an *h* at the end.

Baath party/Baathists (de-Baathification): Not Ba’th party.

Baqubah

Bekaa Valley: In Lebanon.

bin Laden, Usama: On second reference, *bin Laden*.

Fatah

fatwa: Written in italics.

haj

Hamas

Hizballah

Iraqiyya: Iraqi political movement.

Knesset: Israeli parliament, with a capital *K*.

Koran

Majles: Iranian parliament. Capitalize *M*.

Mohammed: When referring to the Prophet Mohammed.

Mossad

Maliki: Not *al-Maliki*.

Netanyahu, Benjamin: Not Binyamin.

Col. Qadhafi, Muammar: former Libyan leader.

Palestinians/Palestine: Don't use *Palestine* when referring to the disputed region. *Gaza, the West Bank, and Palestinian Territories* are better.

Palestinian Authority: The Palestinian administration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Quartet: Consists of the United States, Russia, the UN, and the EU. Created to address the conflict in the Middle East.

roadmap: Refers to the U.S.-backed peace plan for the Middle East. One word; do not capitalize.

Rouhani

Sana'a: Not Sanaa.

Saud al-Faisal: On second reference, Foreign Minister Saud.

sharia

Sheikh, sheikh: Capitalize when used with a name.

Shia: Not *Shi'ite*.

UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon; spell out on first reference.

Usama bin Laden: Never UBL.

Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs

Afghan: **The adjective or noun that refers to people or things from Afghanistan.** *Afghani* is the name of Afghanistan's currency.

AfPak: Not preferred. Spell out both countries when referring to overall Afghanistan/Pakistan policy.

Baluchestan vs. Balochistan: First is province of Iran (full name is Sistan va Baluchestan); second is in Pakistan.

Berdimuhamedov: Spelling for the President of Turkmenistan.

burqa

Kyrgyz Republic/Kyrgyzstan: Either is acceptable.

Lashkar-e-Taiba: Pakistani terrorist group; can use LeT on second reference.

Manas Transit Center: When referring to the U.S. facility on Kyrgyzstan's Manas Air Base.

Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs

ALBA: Bolivarian Alliance. Spell out on first reference.

Argentine: Not *Argentinian*.

CELAC: Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. Spell out on first reference.

Ecuador, Ecuadorian

Salvadoran: Adjective for people from El Salvador.

UNASUR: Union of South American Nations. Spell out on first reference.

USINT: U.S. Interest Section in Havana, Cuba. Spell out on first reference.

General Terms

Administration: Capitalize when referring to the current Administration. Former administrations and foreign administrations would be lower case.

Advisor/er: Either is acceptable.

Agrément: use accent.

air strike: Two words.

Allies, allies: Capitalize only when referring to NATO Allies.

Ambassador: Do not abbreviate; always capitalize when referring to a particular U.S. ambassador, even when unaccompanied by the name. Otherwise, do not capitalize unless accompanied by the name (e.g., Ambassador Jones).

American citizens: Never AmCits. Preferred use is U.S. citizens.

Andrews Air Force Base

Assistant Secretary: Always capitalize when referring to a State Department Assistant Secretary. Do not abbreviate.

Ban Ki-moon

Board of Directors/board: Only capitalize “board” when it appears as part of the full name of an institution. Otherwise it is a generic noun. (Not/not: “The Board approved the action.” OK: “The MCC Board of Directors approved the action.”) The down style also applies to “chairperson.”

Burns’: Not Burns’s, for the Deputy Secretary.

canceled: Not cancelled.

capital, Capitol: The Capitol is a building located in the nation’s capital. Enough capital can buy influence in the White House, the Capitol, or elsewhere in the capital.

cease-fire, cease fire: One word with hyphen as a noun. *The rebels announced a cease-fire.* Two words when as a verb. *The rebels will cease fire December 1.*

Chargé d’Affaires ad interim: Not necessary to include “ad interim,” and “Chargé” is acceptable on second reference. Always capitalize Chargé and the A in “d’Affaires.”

Attaché: accent on attaché is acceptable; as in Defense Attaché.

Communist Party: Do not capitalize “the party” if used alone on second reference.

comprised: Not *comprised of*. Example of correct use: *The panel comprises five members.*

Congress/Congressional: Capitalize on all references. (An exception to the down-style of capitalization.)

Congressman or Congresswoman: Use *Senator* or *Representative* instead, as appropriate.

counterterrorism

counterintelligence

counternarcotics

counteroffensive

coup: Use has political implications because U.S. laws are sometimes triggered when a coup occurs. Use with caution.

Deputy Secretary Burns: Not Deputy Burns. When not accompanied by the name, still capitalize.

Department: Department of State preferred on first reference; after that “the Department” is acceptable if clear to which federal department text is referring.

Department of Defense/DoD: DoD (not/not DOD), acceptable on first reference.

Department of State/DOS: DOS on second reference, not DoS. This holds true for other cabinet agencies other than DoD.

disburse, disperse: To *disburse* is to spend or allocate; to *disperse* is to scatter.

DNI/ODNI: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, DNI/ODNI acceptable on first reference.

e-mail

embassy, consulate: Do not capitalize unless using as part of the full name, e.g., “Embassy Manila” but later “the embassy.”

en route: Not *enroute*.

FAV: fully armored vehicle. Spell out on first reference.

forego, forgo: To *forego* is to precede; to *forgo* is to give up or to do without.

Foreign Minister xxxx: Can use FM on first reference. Do not capitalize when not using with name (e.g., “the foreign minister said...”)

foreign ministry: Capitalize only if referring to official name of the ministry. *The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.*

Foreign Service: Should be capitalized when referencing the U.S. Foreign Service or used as part of Foreign Service Officer.

former + Title: Do not capitalize *f*. Example: *former Foreign Minister Peres.*

front-runner

funeral: A funeral is a service, so it is redundant to use *funeral service*.

FY 2012: Not/not FY2012 or FY12.

G-8: Use hyphen. United States, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, Canada, and Russia.

G-20

G-77

government: Capitalize when a proper name: Government of Sudan, Sudanese government. Do not/not abbreviate as gov’t and do not capitalize if referring only to the government. Do not use acronym GOS for Government of Sudan, for example.

guerrilla

handover: Noun form. Verb phrase is *hand over* (two words, no hyphen).

hard-line, hard-liners: Except when referring to *a hard line*.

high-level engagement: Use a hyphen.

however: Do not use at the beginning of a sentence unless as in: *However it is done, do it well.*

NOT/NOT: However, she did it anyway.

human rights: Not necessary to hyphenate when used as an adjective (i.e., human rights dialogue), as phrase is clearly a package.

IED: Improvised explosive device. Spell out on first reference.

internally displaced persons (IDPs): Spell out on first reference, no need to capitalize. (Note: Refugees cross international borders. IDPs do not. Be sure to use the correct term.)

international financial institutions: IFIs. Spell out on first reference; do not capitalize when spelling out.

International Monetary Fund (IMF): No need to spell out on first reference.

internet: Do not use capital "I."

judgment: Not judgement.

loan, lend: Lend is a verb, loan is a noun. Correct: Please lend us a hundred dollars. Incorrect: Please loan us a hundred dollars.

longstanding

long-term

marshal, Marshall: Marshall is a proper name. All other uses are *marshal* (capitalized as *Marshal* if used as part of a title).

materiel: No accent mark. Redundant when used with *war* or *military*, so do not write *war materiel* or *military materiel*.

media: A plural noun. (e.g., "Media are reporting...")

MFA: Use Ministry of Foreign Affairs on first reference. Do not use for the UK, which has a *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*.

moment magnitude scale

(Abbreviated as *MMS*, noted as *MW*, is now the scale used to estimate magnitudes for all modern large earthquakes by the U.S. Geological Survey instead of the Richter scale.)

Memorandum of Understanding: Capitalize Memorandum of Understanding when referring to a specific agreement.

multi-ethnic

multi-national force: Spell out on first reference; may be abbreviated later as *MNF*.

multi-polar

multi-party

multi-year

NGO: Non-governmental organization, no need to spell out on first reference.

no-fly zone

non-emergency/non-essential

personnel: For the purposes of drawdowns at missions overseas, we should say "emergency" and "non-emergency" personnel (never non-essential personnel).

NSC: For the National Security Council, refers only to interagency meetings, decisions, etc., directly involving the President. For example, use “The NSC decided that additional sanctions would be necessary” if a meeting chaired by the President made the decision. For interagency decisions that did not directly involve the President, use “National Security Staff.”

NSS: For National Security Staff, also refers to all interagency meetings, decisions, etc., not directly involving the President. For example, use “NSS decided that additional sanctions would be necessary” if a deputies committee or IPC made the decision. For interagency decisions made by meetings chaired by the President, use “National Security Council.”

numbers: Spell out numbers from one to nine, you may use the numerical form for higher numbers.

online: Do not use on-line.

ongoing

onsite, on site: Write *onsite* as an adjective, otherwise *on site*. *Onsite preparations have begun*. But *The team is on site*.

ordnance, ordinance, ordinants: *Ordnance* refers to military weapons and ammunition. *Ordinance* is a city law. *Ordinants* are people who ordain.

over, more than: *Over* describes a location; *more than* describes an amount. We have more than 500 U.S. personnel in Kabul.

parliament: Do not capitalize unless used as a proper noun, e.g., the British Parliament.

party: Capitalize only when part of a formal name, such as the *South African National Party* or *Communist Party*.

peacekeeping

percent: Do not use the % sign unless writing a long string of figures and percentages, as in a chart or list of election results.

persuade/convince: Despite modern usage trends, these words are not interchangeable. Persuade should be used with the infinitive “to,” as in “he persuaded his boss to adopt this policy.” On the other hand, convince is generally used with prepositions such as “that” or “of,” as in “he was convinced that his policy would work.”

P5: Refers to the United States, China, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

P5+1 and E3+3: Refers to the P5 plus Germany (when talking to Germany, we often use E3+3).

policy-maker

President: Never POTUS. The President or President Obama.

president, presidency: Capitalize *president* only if part of a title: *The President of Mexico; President Felipe Calderon; she intends to speak to the president.* But always use “the President” if writing about President Obama.

prime minister: PM is acceptable only when used with a name.

province: Do not capitalize unless used with proper name.

provincial reconstruction team: Do not capitalize when spelled out; PRT is acceptable on first reference.

re-election

re-enter

re-established

Representative: For members of the U.S. House of Representatives; do not use *Congressman* or *Congresswoman*. Use *Representative* with the first name, surname, political affiliation, and state for the first reference, e.g., *Representative John Doe (R-MS)*. Use *Representative* with surname for subsequent references, e.g., *Representative Doe*. The noun “representative” (not capitalized) can also be used on subsequent references without a surname.

right-wing, right wing: Use *right-wing* as an adjective, *right wing* as a noun phrase.

runoff: When used as a noun or adjective.

Secretary: Always capitalize when referring to the Secretary of State.
Secretary-General, Secretary General: Spell out. *UN Secretary-General* is hyphenated, NATO and some other secretaries general are not. Check the organization’s website.

Senator: For members of the U.S. Senate. Use *Senator* with the first name, surname, political affiliation, and state for the first reference, e.g., *Senator John Doe (R-MS)*. Use *Senator* with surname for subsequent references, e.g., *Senator Doe*. The noun “senator” (not capitalized) can also be used on subsequent references without a surname.

service member: Not *servicemember*.

test-fire: Use a hyphen.

timeline

traveling, traveler

two-part, two-way, two-day, etc:
Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

USEU Brussels

USNATO

USUN New York

UNGA: The UN General Assembly; “The UNGA” is acceptable on first reference.

United Nations/UN: No periods. UN can be used on first reference. Spell out *United Nations* when used as a noun.

UNSC: United Nations Security Council. Can be used on first reference without spelling out.

UNSCR: UN Security Council resolution. Can be used on first reference without spelling it out. Do not capitalize “resolution” when spelled out.

UNSYG: Do not use. Use *UN Secretary-General* (with hyphen).

Under Secretary: Always capitalize when referencing a State Department Under Secretary. Do not abbreviate.

United States, U.S.: Abbreviate only when used as an adjective.

USG: Do not/not use. Use U.S. government or just United States or U.S. (as an adjective) instead.

USTR: Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. USTR acceptable on first reference.

website, webpage: Do not capitalize; it’s one word.

World Bank: Spell out.

III. Miscellaneous Grammar/Formatting

For guidance not outlined below, please refer to the *Chicago Manual of Style* online at <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/16/contents.html>.

Accents: Use in foreign language names or titles is acceptable. For example, Mexican President Peña. An exception to this is for paper that will be transmitted as a cable; for these, use of accents in foreign language names or titles is not permitted.

Apostrophes:

- Use an apostrophe and [s] to form the possessive of singular or plural nouns that do not end in [s] or an [s] or [z] sound. *Example: If singular, officer's. If plural, officers'.*
- Add only an apostrophe to form the possessive of singular or plural nouns ending in [s] or an [s] or [z] sound. *Example: Burns'; Chavez'.*
- Do not use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns like whose, its, or ours, but do add an apostrophe and an [s] with indefinite pronouns like someone's.
- Do not use an apostrophe to pluralize an acronym unless you intend to make it possessive. *Example if plural non-possessive: We are looking for POWs. If possessive singular: We are looking for that POW's photograph. If possessive plural: We are recording POWs' personal stories.*

Capitalization: In general, follow a “down style,” avoiding excessive capitalization of nouns unless they are used in the full proper form. Examples: *“The government collapsed. Prime Minister Singh said he liked Washington, and the foreign minister indicated Singh would like to visit again. The Copenhagen Accord was a great success; the accord will....*

- For capitalization in section titles or subtitles, follow the Chicago Manual guidance.
- For capitalization of Department position titles, please always capitalize, even when not accompanied by the proper name, e.g., Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary.
- Always capitalize “President” when referring to the President of the United States and always capitalize Secretary of State when referring to the U.S. Secretary of State.

Classification: Please refer to the S/ES InfoLink paper formats for examples of how to classify papers correctly. See also S/ES guidance on how to classify documents with attachments. Every paragraph should have a classification marking.

Hyphens: Join two words with a hyphen when they act as a compound modifier preceding a noun and expressing a single concept. Example: *The six-headed*

snake was concerned about his EER. Exception: Do not use a hyphen to join the word *very* or any adverb ending in *ly*. Example of correct use: *The overly concerned junior officer was nervous about his EER.* Noun phrases take hyphens when used as adjectives: *The 15-year-old car;* (BUT *the car was 15 years old*).

- Six-Party Talks
- high-level engagement
- long-term problem
- BUT: human rights violations (exception per common usage)

Line Breaks: Do not split dates or names across lines. “Ambassador Moriarty” or “April 24” should appear as a unit, not “Ambassador/April” at the end of one line and “Moriarty/24” at the beginning of the next.

Margins: All memos are to be in 14 point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins on all sides. The spacing between lines is single. (Note: Some word processing programs have default settings of 1.25 inches for the left and right margins and 1.15 for the spacing between lines. These must be changed manually.)

Non-English Characters: Foreign characters, such as accent marks, letters with tildes, umlauts, and the like, are permissible except in documents that will be transmitted as cables.

Numbers: Spell out one through nine; use numerals for 10 or more. Exceptions:

- Do not start a sentence with a numeral. Either spell out the number or recast the sentence so the number is not at the beginning.
- Use numerals smaller than 10 in lists of data such as vote totals or in percentages.

Orphans: Avoid allowing a portion of a paragraph or sentence, known as “an orphan,” to continue to the next page. Please attempt to have the whole paragraph appear on the same page.

Quotes: Always use smart quotes (“”) in memo format. Straight quotes are appropriate for cable format.

Punctuation:

- For a list of items in a series, use the comma before the last item. *The Secretary asked for a dime, two nickels, and a receipt.*
- Double space after a period (or end of a sentence) before beginning the next sentence.
- Double space after a colon.

Re-, De- Prefixes: Use hyphens if the stem begins with a vowel; no hyphens required for consonants. Examples: re-education, de-escalation, reprocessing, decontamination.

Reflexive Pronouns:

- Example: *I asked the President to issue an invitation to the Secretary and to me.* Not: *I asked the President to issue an invitation to the Secretary and to myself.* (Correct: *Knowing the President would want me there, I invited myself.*)

Subjects, Objects, and Subject-Verb Agreement:

- If the subject is singular in American usage, the corresponding verb and pronoun should also be in the singular form. Example: *The National Council is meeting in December. It will discuss the January elections.* Not: *The National Council are meeting in December. They will discuss the January elections.*
- Do not use subject pronouns as objects. Example: *The President gave the information to the Secretary and me.* Not: *The President gave the information to the Secretary and I.*

Suffix “-ian:” When referring to two countries, please use “U.S.-India relations” and not “U.S.-Indian relations.” Likewise, please use U.S.-India bilateral relationship and not “U.S.-Indian bilateral relationship.”

That/Which:

- Required before subordinate clauses beginning with conjunctions. Example of correct use: *The Secretary said that, while he did not want to speak with the foreign minister, he would do so.*
- Helpful as a signal to indicate parallel parts of a long, complicated sentence. Example: *The Secretary said there were few things he worried about more than the slippery floor in the cafeteria, which had resulted in several complaints, and that he would talk to his staff about it.*

- When referring to a person, use *who* rather than *that*: *The people who attended.*
- Use *which* rather than *that* only when a phrase is set off by commas: *The book that I read, which is not interesting, contained several typographical errors.*
- As a relative pronoun, “*that*” introduces a clause essential to the meaning of the sentence (a “restrictive” or “defining” clause) and therefore needs no comma. “*Which*,” on the other hand, introduces a “nonrestrictive” or “nondefining” clause, which merely conveys additional information, and therefore requires a comma. Thus, “Post reports the version that the U.S. government opposes will likely pass,” but “Post reports the law, which takes effect March 1, imposes new requirements on local governments.” Note also that “*that*” can often be omitted in this case as well. “Post reports the version the U.S. government opposes will likely pass.”

Time: To prevent confusion, use the exact date (month and day) whenever possible. Avoid adverbial phrases like *last year*, *this month*, or *next week*. It is not necessary to include the year in the date if referring to an event that occurred recently or will occur soon (often seen in appointment requests).

U.S. dollar amounts: Express U.S. dollar amounts using the \$ sign and the numbers, as in \$200 million loan, unless the context is a country that also calls the dollar its currency. So the same loan, if given by an Australian bank, would be a US \$200 million loan.

Verb Agreement: Verb tenses should generally match in clauses (e.g., The Secretary *said* he *spoke* to the Deputy Secretary). When a clause describes an enduring condition or fact, however, it should use the present tense (e.g., The Secretary *told* Lavrov the human rights situation *is* intolerable).

IV. Correspondence Guidance

This section provides guidance on the preparation of correspondence for the Secretary, the Deputy Secretaries, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, the Counselor, and the White House.

A. Guidelines on Preparation of Letters for Secretary John F. Kerry:

- Use the active instead of the passive voice.
- Use short, concise sentences and paragraphs.
- Use a warm, straightforward, informal style. Avoid stilted, convoluted, or bureaucratic language.
- Use superlatives sparingly.
- Avoid using the words “truly” and “tireless.” Do not repeat the same phrases/words in the opening and closing paragraphs.
- Unless otherwise awkward, avoid beginning a paragraph with “I” when drafting correspondence for the Secretary’s signature.
- Keep the text as short as possible while still being fully responsive.
- Respond to each point/issue raised in the incoming correspondence. If this approach is not appropriate, clarify in the cover action memorandum.
- Prepare correspondence under cover of an action memorandum for all items requiring the Secretary’s signature. Standard letters should be formatted on 7 x 9 stationery with one-inch margins. Letters exceeding one page should be on 8.5 x 11 stationery.
- Always use Times New Roman 12-point font. Indent each paragraph using the “Tab” key once for a ½-inch indent. Leave one blank line between paragraphs.
- Place the inside address at the top of the letter, block style.
- Center the closing (“Sincerely”). Center the signature block (“John F. Kerry”); then using the spacebar, place six spaces before “John” to ensure the “J” in “John” aligns with the “S” in “Sincerely.”

B. Correspondence for All Department Principals:

When drafting letters for signature by D, D-MR, P, C, and the White House, please remember the following basic guidelines:

- Use Times New Roman 14-point font for all letters for D, D-MR, P, and C.
- Use a formal salutation, for example, “Dear Mr./Ms./Dr. [Surname].” (If the recipient is personally known, the principal will personalize the salutation.)
- Keep sentences short and uncomplicated. Make sure that each paragraph centers around a clear idea/topic.
- Use a straightforward style. Avoid stilted, convoluted, or bureaucratic language. Use active voice, not passive voice. Use superlatives sparingly.
- Avoid excessive use of the first-person voice (“I”), particularly when referring to a U.S. government policy position.

UNCLASSIFIED

- 22 -

- Keep the text as short as possible while still responding to each point or issue raised in the incoming correspondence. If detailed explanations or supporting data are required, put them in an enclosure.
- Do not use contractions.
- Fit style to substance. For example, letters to personal friends should be warm in tone; responses to unfounded criticism should not be apologetic.
- Try to make the text read as if it were drafted by the principal himself/herself, not by a bureaucracy.
- Limit the use of acronyms. If an acronym is not well known, spell it out when first using it in the text.
- Pay close attention to correct grammar and punctuation. Avoid split infinitives and dangling constructions.

For additional correspondence guidance, please see Infolink.

UNCLASSIFIED