

By the Board, Chairman Morgan and Vice Chairman Owen.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-26503 Filed 10-1-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

International Trade Data System Project Office; International Trade Data System

AGENCY: Department of the Treasury, International Trade Data System Project Office.

ACTION: General notice.

SUMMARY: This document announces the availability of a draft report recommending the design and implementation of the interagency International Trade Data System (ITDS), solicits public comments on that draft, and announces a public briefing on the ITDS recommendations.

DATES: The public briefing will take place on Thursday, November 5, 1998, beginning at 9 a.m. Requests to appear to present views at the briefing must be received on or before October 21, 1998. Requests to attend the briefing must be received on or before November 2, 1998. Written comments must be received on or before November 12, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The public briefing will take place in the Department of Commerce Auditorium located at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. Requests to appear at or attend the briefing must be submitted to the ITDS Project Office by telephone at (202) 216-2760, or by e-mail at the ITDS Web Site (www.itds.treas.gov). Comments may be submitted in writing to the Department of the Treasury, International Trade Data System Project Office, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20229, or by e-mail at ITDS@usa.net.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard A. Kuzmack, Deputy Director, ITDS Project Office (202-216-2760).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The International Trade Data System ("ITDS") is a Federal Government information technology initiative of the National Performance Review. The ITDS will provide the public with a single window through which to submit data and make payments required by all Federal Government agencies that regulate international trade transactions. It will also provide the public with a single, convenient point for accessing data on international trade. The ITDS will contribute to the creation of a

government that works better and costs less by: (1) Reducing the cost and burden of processing international trade transactions for both the private trade community and the government; (2) improving the enforcement of and compliance with government trade regulations (such as those addressing public health and safety, animal and plant health, consumer protection, etc.); and (3) providing access to international trade data and information that are more accurate, complete, and timely.

The ITDS initiative is led by a Board of Directors chaired by the Department of the Treasury and composed of representatives from government agencies that are major participants in government international trade data processes. Agencies represented on the ITDS Board of Directors include the Treasury Department, Agriculture Department, Customs Service, Food and Drug Administration, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Transportation Department, Commerce Department, International Trade Commission, and the Office of the U. S. Trade Representative. The initiative is also supported by a project office hosted by the Department of the Treasury.

The ITDS Board of Directors has reviewed and approved for public comment a draft project plan for implementing the ITDS system. Although agency reviews and other work continue on the draft, the ITDS Board has determined that it is appropriate at this point to seek public comment as part of the review process. Toward this end, the Board is posting major portions of the ITDS Draft Design Report on the Internet for public review and comment. The report can be accessed from the link on the ITDS Web Site at <http://www.itds.treas.gov>. The report consists of a series of sections each serving a specific purpose with the objective of satisfying government guidelines and requirements for the design, development, and administration of the scope of the ITDS.

The various sections of the ITDS Design Report are as follows.

Concept of Operations

The Concept of Operations is central to the Draft Design Report. It provides an overview of ITDS and forms the basis for the contents of the other sections. The conceptual basis for the Design Report was derived from the IT-06 Task Force Report dated May 1995. The key components outlined in the IT-06 Report that form the foundation of ITDS are: Border Operations, including commercial cargo and conveyance processing; License and Permitting, including the accounting for goods

processed against specific licenses or permits; Statistics, Analysis, and Policy Development; and Trade Promotion. Another important factor regarding the functional content of the Concept of Operations is the design principles adopted by the ITDS Board of Directors.

Information Technology Architecture Guidelines

The guidance contained in OMB Memorandum (M-97-16), Information Technology Architectures, and the recommended Department of the Treasury Information Technology Architecture (ITA), were used in the development of the ITA Guidelines for the proposed system. The technical section of the ITA identifies the various rules, government directives, and standards to which agency systems must adhere in developing information systems. Collectively, the sections contained within the Design Report are intended to fulfill the guidelines outlined in M-97-16 in addition to satisfying the requirements of the Clinger-Cohen Act, OMB Circular A-130, and OMB Policy on Funding Information Systems Investments.

Hardware and Software Alternatives

The Hardware and Software alternatives section describes the alternative approaches (centralized, distributed, or a completely outsourced system). This section of the Design Report discusses how each alternative would be addressed: including transaction processing, network communications, security, ITDS applications, data warehouse, backup power supplies, and a backup data center. The ITDS is looking for the most cost-effective means of operating the system over the long term and, toward this end, is seriously considering designing the system to facilitate outsourcing.

Risk Management

The Risk Management section describes a systematic approach to identifying and controlling factors that could adversely affect the implementation of ITDS. It includes the procedures and automated tools to be used in tracking risks, assessing the likelihood of their occurrence, their consequences, and mitigating plans. The ITDS Project Office has identified ten risks, which are included in this section.

Configuration Management

The Configuration Management section provides a framework for identifying and managing changes to the

ITDS. It recommends policies, methodologies, and processes for the design control and includes the use of automated tools and review boards. It establishes the mechanism for identifying and evaluating costs, schedule, and performance impacts of proposed changes against established baselines.

Data Standardization

This section details the efforts undertaken by the ITDS Project Office to arrive at a set of common data elements for imports, exports, and in-transit shipments, including data specific to the conveyance, cargo, and people (drivers and crews of commercial conveyances). Conditional data elements are also included that are specific to a particular commodity, country, or agency. Optional data elements have also been identified that are accepted and stored by ITDS at the option of the filer. Government provided data that is generated as a result of internal ITDS system processing complete the standard data set.

Cost/Benefit

The Cost/Benefit section begins the work of estimating the financial impact of implementing the ITDS. Using available data, this section currently includes estimates of the effects of reducing the burden on the trade community associated with filing government forms required by the import and export processes. Though hard numbers are difficult to obtain and methodologies for determining costs and benefits can be challenged, initial estimates indicate that the international trade community could save \$8.9 billion of filing costs over the expected life of the ITDS (through 2005). This translates to a net benefit of \$2 billion, or a benefit of \$9 for every \$1 spent. Initial cost estimates for the implementation of the ITDS are approximately \$256 million through the end of 2005. This section also applies sensitivity tests to the estimates and reaches a confident conclusion that, even at this initial stage, it is clear that the benefits for the ITDS implementation substantially exceed the expected costs.

Interested parties (importers, exporters, brokers, carriers, and others) are encouraged to review and comment on the ITDS Draft Design Report. Comments should be submitted in writing by November 12, 1998. Delivery is preferred in electronic form, e-mailed to the following address: ITDS@usa.net. Comments submitted on paper can be sent to the Department of the Treasury, International Trade Data System Project

Office, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20229.

A public meeting regarding the ITDS project proposal will be held on Thursday, November 5, 1998 from 9 am to 1 p.m. The public meeting will take place at the Department of Commerce Auditorium located at 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. The meeting will provide a briefing on and high-level overview of the proposed system, an opportunity for presentation of representative points of view of industry participants, and a panel discussion of selected questions submitted by the audience. Those attending the meeting are encouraged to review the Draft Design Report before the public meeting.

The November 5 public meeting is open to all, however advance registration is required. To register, contact the ITDS Project Office on (202) 216-2760, or register by e-mail at the ITDS Web Site: www.itds.treas.gov, on or before November 2, 1998. If registering by e-mail, please include name, title, organization, phone number, fax number and email address. Requests to make a presentation should also be submitted to the project office by email or on paper, no later than October 21, 1998. Owing to limited time and the value of including a representative range of perspectives, the project office reserves the discretion to select and limit oral presentations.

The ITDS Board of Directors welcomes any and all comments on the ITDS project as proposed. The Board is also especially interested in feedback by public comment on the following issues:

(1) *Single electronic face for government in the collection of trade data.* One overall goal of the ITDS initiative is to consolidate, streamline, integrate, and organize government information collection and storage processes to provide the trade with a single, common, and electronic interface with the federal government for purposes of collecting information and financial charges (e.g. duties, fees, and other charges) with respect to international trade transactions. To what extent is our perception correct that elimination of redundant transactions with multiple agencies will benefit private firms, and international trade processes, by reducing direct and indirect administrative costs?

(2) *Standardized data elements, definitions, and declarations across government.* Another major area of emphasis of the ITDS initiative is to simplify and speed up the process of submitting and using information required by the government in connection with international trade

transactions by: limiting information submitted to that needed by documented requirements of government agencies; developing common data elements and definitions based to the fullest extent possible on appropriate commercial standards already in use within the international trade community; and standardizing declarations made in connection with imports and exports, across all federal agencies, and ideally, over the longer term, as an international standard acceptable for all governments. Data elements are divided into two categories, "common" and "conditional;" common data elements would be submitted in connection with all international trade transactions, and conditional elements would be submitted on a conditional basis, depending on the nature of the specific transaction. Although such standardization will in some instances require some parties to submit more information in a single submission than they have provided to any one agency in the past, the overall effect of the new approach will be to dramatically reduce the number of different places to which information is submitted (to one), and the total amount of information actually provided (the goal is to move from duplication that is massive to no duplication). What are your reactions to the data elements and definitions as they are proposed, and their classification as common and conditional? Will collection of these data allow the Federal Government to enforce effectively the laws and regulations in which you are interested? What further improvements would you suggest?

(3) *Shared database for shared access and dissemination across agencies.* The ITDS initiative will also simplify and change current government processes by creating in ITDS a single system of international trade data records that is disseminated to and accessible by federal agencies in accordance with their authorized missions. Although private parties will always have access to their own data, strict security controls will be implemented to assure that confidentiality of individual corporate transactions is respected. We seek advice as to which parties (brokers, forwarders, carriers, importer, exporters, others) need access to the record of a transaction, and what should be the limitations of access. For example, to what extent should importers have access to data filed by their customs brokers, carriers, and other service providers, and should the importer be able to alter these data?

(4) *Coordination with the trade in completing ITDS design report and transition planning.* The ITDS Board is committed to coordinating with the trade to receive and consider feedback in shaping the final design report recommendations, and working with other agencies and organizations and their ongoing activities in doing so. The potential of the ITDS initiative will most likely be realized through assistance from the trade in designing the system and developing plans for transition to the new environment in the future. What recommendations would you make as to the best means for the trade to coordinate with the government in moving to the new ITDS environment? What suggestions would you make as to strategies the government should pursue to minimize the costs and facilitate the changes required to make this transition?

Dated: September 25, 1998.

John P. Simpson,

Chairman, International Trade Data System Board of Directors.

[FR Doc. 98-26416 Filed 10-1-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4820-02-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Proposed Discontinuance of the Cumulative Bulletin; Comment Request

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Internal Revenue Bulletin (IRB), the weekly official publication of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, contains revenue rulings, revenue procedures, notices, announcements, and other tax matters. The contents of the weekly bulletins are consolidated semiannually and reissued in the Cumulative Bulletins. The IRS proposes to discontinue production of the Cumulative Bulletins after volume 1997-2 (July-December 1997). They duplicate information already available in the Internal Revenue Bulletins, including the cumulative listings which appear semiannually. The IRBs can also be obtained electronically with Internet access. A commercial distributor also produces a cumulative product similar to the Cumulative Bulletin. The IRS invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on the proposed discontinuance of the Cumulative Bulletins.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before November 2, 1998 to be assured consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Rene Mondesir, Jr., Internal Revenue Service, OP:FS:FP:P:1, room 5617, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20224. You may e-mail Mr. Mondesir at Rene@publish.no.irs.gov or send him a fax at (202) 622-5004.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with section 3506(d)(3) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13, the IRS is soliciting comments from the public on the discontinuance of the Cumulative Bulletins.

Cumulative Bulletins

The Cumulative Bulletins are semiannual publications consolidating Internal Revenue Bulletins. They span 6-month periods covering January through June and July through December of each year. The Cumulative Bulletins are divided into four parts as follows:

Part I—1986 Code, includes rulings and decisions based on provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

Part II—Treaties and Tax Legislation, includes revenue rulings under tax conventions, tax legislation, and related committee reports;

Part III—Administrative, Procedural, and Miscellaneous, includes revenue procedures, notices, and other miscellaneous material; and

Part IV—Items of General Interest, includes notices of proposed rulemaking, and the disbarment and suspension list.

The IRS proposes to discontinue the Cumulative Bulletins for the following reasons:

1. They are compilations of the weekly Internal Revenue Bulletins. Information in the Cumulative Bulletins is already available to customers in the Internal Revenue Bulletins. Cumulative listings of actions relating to court decisions and declaratory judgement proceedings, as well as an index of items published in the bulletins, appear in the first weekly issue of the Internal Revenue Bulletins for January and July of each year.

2. The Internal Revenue Bulletins can be accessed electronically; therefore, the electronic on-line research option makes a cumulative format unnecessary.

3. A document comparable to the IRS-produced Cumulative Bulletin is available commercially for those customers still desiring a cumulative format.

Approved:

Sheldon D. Schwartz,

National Director, Tax Forms and Publications Division.

[FR Doc. 98-26495 Filed 10-1-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-U

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition Determinations: "French Prints From the Age of the Musketeers."

AGENCY: United States Information Agency.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985, 22 U.S.C. 2459), Executive Order 12047 of March 27, 1978 (43 FR 13359, March 29, 1978), and Delegation Order No. 85-5 of June 27, 1985 (50 FR 27393, July 2, 1985). I hereby determine that the objects to be included in the exhibit, "French Prints from the Age of the Musketeers" (see list), imported from abroad for the temporary exhibition without profit within the United States, are of cultural significance. These objects are imported pursuant to loan agreements with foreign lenders. I also determine that the exhibition or display of the listed objects at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts from on or about October 21, 1998 to on or about January 10, 1999 is in the national interest. Public Notice of these Determinations is ordered to be published in the **Federal Register**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Paul Manning, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, 202/619-5997, and the address is Room 700, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547-0001.

Dated: September 30, 1998.

Les Jin,

General Counsel.

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Culturally Significant Objects Imported for Exhibition Determinations

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given of the following determinations: Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Act of October 19, 1965 (79 Stat. 985, 22 U.S.C.