



UNIFORMITY IN SYMBOLS OF COASTAL AVIATION CHARTS.

by

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Coastal charts for aviation are somewhat more complicated than those for the interior of a country owing to the numerous aids to navigation for surface craft which may also serve aviators when approaching land or in flying along coasts. Incidentally, there is no reason why the same symbols, signs, abbreviations, etc. should not be used on coastal aviation charts as for those used on land aviation charts to represent exactly the same objects. Sign language preceded written language. The Tower of Babel had nothing to compare with the modern confusion which is caused through the innumerable words in the various languages which are used to explain on charts the nature of the objects required to be understood and recognised by navigators. Symbols obviate all this.

The speed of modern flying permits of little time for the reading of the explanations of the nature of prominent objects, even when the language is understood. As it would not be possible to equip air-craft with copies of all the dictionaries required to fly across Europe, the more simple solution might be to use universal signs and thus do away with most language difficulties. There would still remain enough. This sounds simple, but once a country has adopted its own particular symbols and signs for its charts, it usually favours international uniformity only in so far as its own signs and symbols are proposed for adoption for the purpose.

Some countries object to adopting signs which cannot be used on their own charts, because the symbolised object does not exist in their own particular country. For example, the International Meteorological Committee has proposed a set of international storm warning signals by day and by night to take the place of the twenty-six different systems which are now brutally inflicted upon seamen. Several countries have adopted this international system, but have refused to adopt the Hurricane (or storm of great violence) Signal on the ground that hurricanes do not occur in their countries, overlooking the fact that if their own seamen are not familiar with this signal, they will fail to recognise it when it is hoisted in other countries where hurricanes are prevalent. In the same way, aviators will not be familiar with the symbol when they see it on charts other than those which are produced by their own countries.

The adoption of the proposed internationally uniform symbols on aviation charts is a case of "now or never" because all countries are just at the critical period when it can be done with minimum inconvenience. Unfortunately, the countries which have been most progressive in publishing aviation charts of their own countries will be the most heavily penalised by having to change theirs, while those countries which have been backward in this respect, will suffer less inconvenience.

At an International Map Conference, which took place in England last July, a number of new aviation symbols for ordinary land maps were adopted, no attention having been paid to the adoption of symbols for the same objects by the Convention of 13th October 1919 relating to the Regulations of Aerial Navigation as proposed and adopted for Air Navigation by the International Commission, which has twenty-four States Members and which conference took place in Paris. The Agreement came into force on the 11th July 1922 through its acceptance by fourteen of the signatory States and has since been ratified by many others, as follows: Belgium, Great Britain, Dominion of Canada, Commonwealth of Australia, Union of South Africa, Dominion of New Zealand, Irish Free State, India, Bulgaria, Chile, France, Greece, Italy, Japan, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Roumania, Saar Territory, Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Siam, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and Uruguay.

At the request of the Department of State, this Bureau recently forwarded to Washington 100 copies of its tabulation, here re-produced, but with additional explanatory memoranda for the use of the International Conference on Civil Air Navigation, which is to meet in that city on December 12-14, by invitation of the U. S. Government extended to 54 different countries. (The Bureau's memorandum was published in its "Hydrographic Bulletin" for October, pages 275-9). This Bureau documents most international maritime conferences with information as to existing conditions and international agreements which have been previously entered upon with a hope of avoiding duplication of work and wasted effort. In this particular instance, the Bureau is taking the initiative by its timely tabulation published herewith.



NOTES
to the above Proposals of the International Commission
for Air Navigation.

NOTES
se rapportant aux Propositions ci-dessus de la Commission
Internationale de Navigation Aérienne

1. Where the true outline of an aerodrome is not known, it is shown as circular.
2. A Sea-plane Customs Station, which is not a Sea-plane Station, is shown by the letter **D**, in sloping Egyptian Capitals, under the name of the place.
3. A High-Power Wireless Station, of which the masts exceed 70 metres in height, is shown by the sign for a wireless station, increased in size and thickness of line.
4. **M** denotes a meteorological station where observations from a network of stations and forecasts are available; or a station reporting only its own observations by telegraph or similar means. **M** or **m**, if not combined with the sign **A**, are shown under the place-name; and when the latter is not given are shown with a dot indicating the position of the station.
5. Where at an aerodrome the ground sign is the name of the station written in full, the sign for an aerial ground sign is not employed.
6. Aerial routes are not shown on the General Maps; a list of principal official air routes, within the limits of the sheet, together with their control points, is given in the margin of the sheet.
7. The height of aerodromes shall be given to the nearest metre.
8. The values in feet, or other national unit, may be added in brackets.
9. Wells are only shown where of special importance in arid regions.
10. Conspicuous features are only shown where they are isolated or dominate over other features of a like nature; features for which no sign is provided may be shown as they occur, together with, if desired, their descriptions.
11. Ground tints may be employed where the information so given is of value to airmen.
12. Thick forests and woods are shown solid green, a stipple of the same colour being employed, and varied to show areas less thickly covered with trees. Where solid green detracts from the value of the hypsometric tints, stipple is used.
13. Falls and rapids are indicated by the words "Fall" or "Rapids" in black. Bridges, viaducts, locks, dams or weirs are indicated by conventional signs.
14. Railway stations are shown on the General Maps only when of special importance to airmen.
15. Light Railways and Tramways are not shown in congested areas.
16. When Light Railways or Tramways run along roads, the letters **L** or **T** only are given, departures from the road being clearly shown.
17. Telegraph or Telephone lines along railways are not shown.
18. Overhead power lines along railways and tramways are not shown.
19. Roads of special value as guides to airmen are accentuated by strengthening the colour or by increasing the width.
20. Water which appears as more than 0.5 m/m will be shown as open water. When the open water on a sheet is limited, the light blue plate is omitted and water lining used.
21. Ocean bed contours are employed for the indication of under water features which are of value to airmen; the depth in metres is shown by figures in black, the depth in the national unit being given in brackets if desired.
22. On the General Maps, important features of the topographical relief, which are not represented on account of the large layer interval, are shown by shading.
23. Figures indicating heights are used as set forth in the table of conventional signs for aerial information.
24. Overprinting for special purposes will be in purple.
25. Information as to currents is written in black lettering along the arrow. The rates of currents are given in kilometres per hour.

Notes of the International Hydrographic Bureau.

26. Dashes and space one mile each in length.
27. Dots one mile apart.
28. The symbols in this column have been adopted internationally by Hydrographic Conferences, except number 25.
29. This symbol is proposed by the International Hydrographic Bureau to indicate area in which it is only permitted for hydroplanes to land or to anchor.
30. These are the symbols and colours used for wind roses on the Pilot Charts of the Upper Air issued by the U.S. Hydrographic Office.
31. As many symbols should be used on the chart as there are gas-tanks or gasometers actually in each group.

QUESTIONNAIRE
of the International Hydrographic Bureau.

In the progress of hydrographic surveying by the various countries of the world, each Hydrographic Office has used its own symbols, abbreviations and language on the charts which they have from time to time published, with the result that those who use the charts are confronted with the difficulties which naturally arise in understanding their various meanings (or indications), but particularly with those printed in another language than their own. One of the purposes of this Bureau is to bring about greater international uniformity in the symbols and abbreviations used on hydrographic charts issued by the various Offices, but this is not a question of introducing changes in the symbols in use on hydrographic charts. It is an attempt to reach agreement as to the symbols to be used on COASTAL CHARTS CONSTRUCTED for the use of aircraft which eventually may be published by national Hydrographic Offices. With the responsibility which is now attached to certain Hydrographic Offices in the production of coastal charts to be used in air navigation, it would seem wise to agree at once upon international symbols to use on such charts so as to avoid all of the prevailing difficulties due to lack of uniformity in hydrographic charts. When it is considered that in using hydrographic charts the speed of a ship usually permits ample time to study the chart, on the contrary, with the high speed used in aviation, there is not time for the pilot to read the various names of objects on aviation charts, there must be some provision made for instant recognition of such objects and that this can only be secured by the use of standard international symbols for the same object by every country.

Fortunately, in this emergency the International Commission for Air Navigation has prepared a number of symbols and proposals for land charts which have been tentatively adopted by its Members and which are published above, thus giving Hydrographers a basis for international agreement, supplementing those already agreed upon.

It is understood that some of the symbols tentatively adopted by the International Commission for Air Navigation are not considered to be entirely satisfactory, even by some of the States which were represented on the Commission. In the U.S. of America, the Army, Navy and Postal Service have jointly adopted uniform symbols for U.S. air charts notwithstanding the action of the International Air Commission, as above, and have further expressed a willingness to regard their present symbols as tentative, if an international agreement can be reached in this urgent and important matter.

In issuing the above tabulation of information this Bureau desires to submit the following questionnaire, replies to which it will be glad to receive at your earliest convenience. These replies, and any suggested changes or any additional symbols sent in to this Bureau, will be tabulated and made ready for the consideration of the First Supplementary International Hydrographic Conference, which is to meet at Monaco, probably in April 1929, when the whole subject will be taken up and voted upon. It is requested therefore that the delegates of each Hydrographic Office be prepared to express the definite views of its Government as to the adoption, at this Conference, of a uniform system of symbols and abbreviations for use on aviation charts prepared by hydrographic offices, along the above lines.

QUESTIONS

1. — Is your Government prepared to adopt an international agreement as to symbols for air charts issued by Hydrographic Offices in case the Supplementary Hydrographic Conference at Monaco, in 1929, can bring about such general agreement?
2. — If on coastal or inland air charts your country uses symbols different from those here given, will you please forward to this Bureau drawings and descriptions thereof if you desire to have them considered?
3. — If you have objection to any of the symbols as shown on the above chart, will you please indicate them by number, state your objections and give a drawing of a symbol which is considered to be better?
4. — What colours should be used in printing any of the above symbols, noting by their numbers any exceptions to the colour black, or to that given in the tabulation.
5. — Should each country be allowed to vary the colour of any symbol to suit the particular background of the chart?
6. — Should each country be allowed to vary the size of the symbols agreed upon according to the scale of the chart on which it is used?
7. — The height of aircraft in flight being indicated to the pilot as the altitude above sea-level, one of the most important features of an air-chart is the clear indication of the height of the relief and its contours above sea-level. Are you willing to permit each country to publish on its charts its own colour gradient with the corresponding heights in numerals or do you prefer that an international standard of gradient colours for definite heights be adopted?
8. — Will you please forward to this Bureau, should you not already have done so, a drawing of the national distinguishing symbol or mark which is painted on the aircraft of your country for international identification?

Notes du Bureau Hydrographique International

26. Les traits et les espaces ont chacun un mille de long.
27. Les points sont écartés d'un mille.
28. Les symboles de cette colonne ont été adoptés internationalement par les Conférences Hydrographiques, à l'exception du numéro 25.
29. Le Bureau Hydrographique International propose ce symbole pour indiquer les zones dans lesquelles les hydravions sont seuls autorisés à amerrir ou à mouiller.
30. Ces symboles et ces couleurs sont ceux qui sont employés pour les roses des vents des Pilot Charts of the Upper Air, publiées par le Service Hydrographique des Etats-Unis d'Amérique.
31. Il y aurait lieu d'employer sur la carte autant de symboles qu'il y a effectivement de réservoirs ou de gazomètres dans les groupes.

QUESTIONNAIRE
du Bureau Hydrographique International

Au cours de l'avancement des travaux de levé hydrographique dans les différents pays du monde, chaque Service Hydrographique a employé ses propres symboles, abréviations et langue sur les cartes qu'il a publiées au fur et à mesure, avec comme résultat que ceux qui emploient ces cartes doivent affronter les difficultés inhérentes à la compréhension de leurs diverses significations (ou indications), mais particulièrement avec those printed in another language than their own. Une des raisons d'être de ce Bureau est d'amener plus d'uniformité internationale dans les symboles et abbreviations employés sur les cartes hydrographiques publiées par les différents Services. Il n'est pas question de modifier les symboles déjà employés pour les cartes hydrographiques, mais d'obtenir un accord pour fixer des symboles pour les CARTES COTIÈRES A L'USAGE DE LA NAVIGATION AÉRIENNE que peuvent éventuellement publier les Services Hydrographiques Nationaux. Vu la responsabilité qui doivent assumer certains Services Hydrographiques produisant des cartes cotières à l'usage de la navigation aérienne, il semblerait judicieux d'arriver de suite à une entente sur les symboles internationaux devant être employés sur ces cartes, afin d'éviter toutes les difficultés auxquelles on se heurte par suite du manque d'uniformité dans les cartes hydrographiques. Si l'on considère que lors de l'emploi des cartes hydrographiques, la vitesse du navire est telle qu'il permet généralement de prendre pleinement le temps nécessaire pour étudier leurs symboles et leur nomenclature, tandis qu'en contrepartie, avec les grandes vitesses pratiquées dans l'aviation, le pilote n'a pas le temps de lire les différents noms d'objets portés sur les cartes d'aviation, on comprendra qu'il y a lieu de prendre des mesures pour qu'il soit possible de reconnaître instantanément ces objets sur les cartes ; ceci ne pourra être atteint que par l'emploi de symboles étalons internationaux pour le même objet par chaque pays.

Heureusement, qu'en l'occurrence, la Commission Internationale pour la Navigation Aérienne a préparé des symboles et des propositions pour cartes terrestres, que ses Membres ont adoptés provisoirement (à l'essai) et qui sont publiés ci-dessus, donnant de ce fait aux hydrographes une base d'accord international venant compléter ceux pour lesquels l'accord a déjà été obtenu.

Il est entendu que quelques-uns des symboles adoptés provisoirement (à l'essai) par la Commission Internationale pour la Navigation Aérienne ne sont pas considérés comme entièrement satisfaisants, même par quelques-uns des Etats qui étaient représentés au sein de la Commission. Aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique, l'Armée, la Marine et le Service des Postes ont adopté conjointement des symboles uniformes pour les cartes d'aviation des Etats-Unis, malgré l'adoption de ceux de la Commission Aérienne Internationale ci-dessus mentionnée, et se sont déclarés prêts à considérer leurs symboles actuels comme provisoires (d'essai), si un accord international eût été réalisé sur cette importante question.

En publiant le tableau synoptique d'information ci-annexe, ce Bureau a l'avantage de soumettre le questionnaire ci-dessous et recueillir avec plaisir les réponses que vous voudrez bien lui envoyer à ce sujet à la date la plus rapprochée à votre convenance. Ces réponses et toutes suggestions relatives à des changements ou à des additions de symboles envoyés à ce Bureau seront mises en tables et préparées pour examen par la Première Conférence Hydrographique Internationale Extraordinaire, qui doit se réunir à Monaco, probablement en Avril 1929, moment auquel le sujet sera re-posé et soumis au vote. En conséquence, les délégués de chaque Service Hydrographique son pris d'être prêts à exprimer les points de vue définitifs de leur Gouvernement quant à l'adoption, à cette Conférence, d'un système uniforme de symboles et d'abréviations pour être employés sur les cartes d'aviation dressées par les Services Hydrographiques conformément à la tenue des lignes ci-dessus.

QUESTIONS :

1. — Votre Gouvernement est-il disposé à l'adoption d'un accord international en ce qui concerne les symboles pour cartes d'aviation publiées par les Services Hydrographiques, dans le cas où la Conférence Hydrographique Extraordinaire de Monaco de 1929 serait à même d'amener un tel accord ?

2. — Si pour les cartes cotières ou terrestres votre pays emploie des symboles différents de ceux here given, voudriez-vous voir l'obligeance d'envoyer à ce Bureau leurs dessins et descriptions, si vous désirez qu'ils soient examinés ?

3. — Si vous avez des objections à formuler sur des symboles quelconques représentés sur la carte ci-dessus, voudriez-vous voir l'obligeance d'indiquer leurs numéros, d'exposer vos objections et de donner le dessin d'un symbole que vous considérez comme meilleur ?

4. — Quelles couleurs devraient être employées pour l'impression d'un quelconque des symboles ci-dessus ? Veuillez noter suivant leur numéro toutes les exceptions à la couleur noire, ou à celle donnée dans le tableau synoptique.

5. — Chaque pays devrait-il être autorisé à varier la couleur d'un symbole quelconque pour établir au fond particulier de la carte ?

6. — Chaque pays devrait-il être autorisé à varier la dimension des symboles sur lesquels l'accord a été réalisé, d'après l'échelle de la carte sur laquelle il est employé ?

7. — Comme l'altitude d'un aéronef en vol est donnée au pilote au-dessus du niveau de la mer, l'une des caractères les plus importants d'une carte d'aéronautique est l'indication claire des hauteurs du relief et des lignes de niveau au-dessus de la mer. Désirez-vous permettre à chaque pays de publier sur chacune de ses cartes le gradient des couleurs avec les chiffres indiquant les altitudes correspondantes, ou bien préférez-vous un type uniforme international de gradient des couleurs pour des hauteurs déterminées ?

8. — Voudriez-vous avoir l'obligeance de fournir au présent Bureau, dans le cas où vous ne l'auriez déjà fait, un dessin du symbole ou marque nationale distinctive qui est peint sur les aéronefs de votre pays dans le but de leur identification internationale ?