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FISCHER WILLIS & PANZER

March 10 1950

Hon Louis A Johnson
Secretary of Defense
Washington 25 D C

Dear Sir

This letter is written on behalf of Mr William F Friedman Director of Communications Research Defense Security Agency He is ill and has received permission to retain us to pursue the matter about which this communication is concerned

Mr Friedman is responsible individually and in collaboration with others for the invention and development of systems and devices in the field of military communications which have proved to be of the utmost importance to the defense of our country For his efforts in this direction he has received the Medal for Merit from President Truman and also the Commendation for Exceptional Civilian Service from Henry L Stimson Secretary of War Copies of both are attached hereto

In connection with these inventions patent applications have been filed the government allowing Mr Friedman alone with respect to some of the applications and with collaborators with respect to others to retain commercial and foreign rights All of these patent applications have been placed in secrecy status one of the inventions has been in secrecy now for over sixteen years and a second for over thirteen years It is highly unlikely that any of the inventions will be released from secrecy at least for a great many years to come

It has already been indicated that Mr Friedman is now ill and in the largest measure his illness is due to the unusually severe strain imposed upon him by the nature of his work Indeed it is probable that his earning capacity has been permanently and heavily impaired In the light of these facts the question has arisen whether in equity an attempt is not warranted to obtain from the Congress an act authorizing the Department of Defense to purchase from Mr Friedman all the rights he has been allowed to retain in the inventions which have been placed in secrecy status by the government for a token payment that would help in easing the concern he might have about his livelihood in the future even though such a payment had little relation to the high value we understand such rights might have under different circumstances There are precedents for such awards in the communications field even in the absence of any property rights in the inventions

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It has occurred to us that the ordinary procedure in pursuing a matter such as this may not be available in this case because of the delicacy of the subject matter of the inventions involved. In any case, we believe it to be best to discuss the matter with a representative of your office before proceeding further. It is therefore the purpose of this letter to request that you designate a representative to whom we would be authorized to present the matter in full and who in turn would have authority to ascertain and inform us of the disposition of the Department of Defense in that connection.

Because we have no way of knowing whether the Department wishes to treat this request in a manner not routine, we are delivering this communication and attachments by hand to Major General Leven C. Allen in order that we will not be in the position of having embarrassed your decision on that score.

Very truly yours,

Henry G. Fiscner