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Digest of Staff Conference, 5 January 1954

Chiefs of Offices
and Staff Divisions

C/S

11 Jan 1954

1. PRODUCTION

a. Informed that PROD, in conjunction with R/D, has devised a method to accomplish support of the scrambler problem through the utilization of ATLAS I. Urged that this operation be established at ESS at the earliest possible date.

b. Advised that "Operation Minimize" has resulted in a 15 per cent reduction of traffic and any further reduction would seriously affect the production of NSA-90.

2. COMPIROLLER

Stated that a schedule would be distributed announcing a series of Office Equipment Maintenance Lectures by representatives of a leading office equipment manufacturer, which will enable NSA to remain abreast of current developments.

3. COMMUNICATION SECURITY

a. Called attention to the difficulty involved in the procurement of civilian employees for the Preparation Branch when these selections are made from the public at large. Noted that C/SEC and ECH were collaborating upon a possible solution to the problem.

b. Stated the eight AFSAM 7's with associated rotors and keying material were being furnished to the British Navy, upon request of the British Joint Service Mission, to be placed aboard prior to the Navy's departure for winter maneuvers.

c. Requested that C/SEC propose to increase the civilian strength by 66 spaces for the preparation facilities at VEFB.

4. SECURITY

Referred to a recent situation when SEC was harassed by last-minute security personnel arrangements for a field test, and requested that in the future consideration be given to the proper advance preparation and coordination with SEC for projects to be operated outside of NSA when security arrangements are necessary.

5. PERSONNEL

Discussed the ramifications of a recent incident involving the discharge of Schedule A civil service employee with Veterans' Preference without recourse to the 30-days' notice required by the Veterans' Preference Act. Noted that his reinstatement and payment of his back salary confirms the fact that veterans employed in Schedule A or any other excepted schedule enjoy certain job rights.

6. NSA-90

Advised that representatives of NSA-90 are visiting SAC next week, initiating the first of a projected series of cross-visits between SAC and NSA to educate them in terms of what COMINT can and cannot do.

7. DIRECTOR

"I have a couple of things I wish to talk about this morning. There is a considerable amount of unfinished business around this Agency of one type or another, things that have been pushed aside for one reason or the other. There are two that I am interested in fundamentally. One of them is that it wasn't done because it wasn't a propitious time to push the matter. Secondly, at the moment we didn't know exactly what to do.

"I want all the Divisions and Offices to take a look at their suspense files without delay, and where they have items of lost nature to put them on their programs and get on with them.

"Let's talk about the first generic category where they have been pushed aside based on a non-propitious time. I would say off-hand that with the completion of a full year of operation under the title of the "National Security Agency" that we are of age. We have in the past year developed the basic philosophy under which we are operating and will operate. I think that if you will go back and recall to your minds a good portion of the things that I have said at one time or another in this meeting or in other meetings where we have sat ad hoc to settle problems, I have attempted to outline what I hope and feel to be fundamental, sound, basic philosophy for a Joint Agency which has the mission of producing and delivering the communications intelligence for the national consumers.

"I would be the last one to complain of putting aside some of the things that have been put aside over the past year, awaiting the final development of the philosophy of operations of NSA. There is one thing in respect to this philosophy that I want to reiterate this morning. This is a service organization, but unlike some of the service organizations the Agency was given certain responsibilities. Normally, we will operate as our consumers want us to operate, provided that in so operating we are not required to controvert the requirements laid on us by our basic law, NSCID No. 9, and the Secretary's doctrine. If we come to a conflict between a consumer (and ourselves) wanting us to do things or not to do them, or to do them in a way which I feel will not allow me to comply with the basic law and the basic responsibilities that are laid down on me, then I no longer can comply completely with the desires laid on me by the consumer. In that case, I want the consumer told in very tasteful but positive language that since I am the one who is responsible, I am going to interpret the basic law. There are fundamentally three people who can overrule my basic interpretation of the law, the special committee, consisting of the Secretary of State and Defense, and the President of the United States. I don't want the people in the Agency to make the decision haphazardly that the desires, requirements, or methodology which the consumer wants are in controversy with what we consider to be our interpretation of the basic doctrine; nor do I want them done by anybody

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except me. I reserve the right to make those decisions myself. You say that it is the requirement placed on the National Security Agency? I can't argue with them a bit with initiating a request in that way. Neither can I argue with them when that is the way they would like to have it satisfied. I agree thoroughly that that is the proper procedure. When we find ourselves in conflict with something that I have laid down and a request from a consumer -- either way it will not be very often, but we have one now and then -- I want the matter referred to me at once and I don't want any procrastination.

"Let's bear in mind that in this category of pushing things off to one side, there are probably a considerable number of matters that have been pushed aside simply because either this wasn't the time to bring the issue up or because we have not yet delineated exactly what we thought about the matter. Look over your old suspense files and your old note accumulations where you have jotted something down you would like to have done, but where you gave it top-of-the-desk treatment as there are no hold baskets except top of the desk. We have made a lot of progress. We have, I say without any equivocation, that we have definitely come of age. If we are to continue to stay of age, we must be professionals and we must do a little bit better than we do with the means now at our disposal. I won't buy the statement, "I will do my best." I am not going to let anybody who is working for me to be the judge of what his best is. I will tell him what his best is. What I want is simply the statement, "O.K., I will do it."

"I repeat what I have said before, that occasionally I suggest a self-appraisal; stop and ask yourself honestly, "How good am I doing?" That presupposes that you are a sufficiently astute individual, that you have developed your own yardstick of where you ought to be going.

"We have started off the New Year. As far as I know this is the only Joint Agency of any size that is operating. We have largely been quinea pigs as to whether or not we can operate in the Defense Department as a Joint Agency. My verdict is that you can. One of the requirements to make it a truly Joint Agency is that those of us who come to it from the three Services when we get here, cease to promote the Service line. When an Army officer comes in this place, I expect him to bring the rich background of his experience. In the other Services, the same, but I don't expect that fellow to represent the Service of the uniform he wears. Our customers represent the Services. They provide for us a Service viewpoint. I expect the people here to be truly non-Service. It is hard for many of us to wash out a good many years of unilateral thinking, but I insist that the only successful way we will ever run this Agency is that each and everyone of us make that attempt. Not until then can this be a completely Joint Agency.

"Now I am going to suggest a step which I think we might try. My reaction every time I have gotten into a run-in on a problem with some of the Services has been to look around for some person with the same color suit of the Service and send him over to the Pentagon or comparable place to solve that problem. We are in considerable variance with that fellow in one of the Services and I have in effect been doing a considerable dis-service to a good many of you who are not like myself who has about run his time out and who doesn't have quite the requirement to maintain good relationship with the personnel officers, etc. I expect to start now to reduce the requirements on officers here to go to their own Service and argue with them. In addition to doing these men a personal dis-service, I have

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deprived some of a chance to learn to be a joint operator. We have a complete staff and operating organization divided on a sound functional basis, and there is representation from all of the Services in every functioning Office and Staff Division.

"I have found, and I say this with a great deal of pride in you, I see very little evidence of pushing the Service line, or taking the Service viewpoint in arguing our positions. The only hope for this outfit is 100 per cent non-observance of that particular phenomenon. The great majority of officers that have been ordered out here for duty with this Agency have had remarkable ability to dis-associate themselves from their up-bringing. I want a little further progress toward a completely non-subjective thinking within the Agency. I expect that some things have gone unfinished or been shoved off to one side because at the time you were unable to be objective about these things. Now let's see what we can do in the next year, and probably there are a great many single advances that we can make.

"I am not arguing whether or not we should have a Defense Department. I have accepted the decision of the President of the United States that we are going to have one. That presupposes that those of us who are heaved into the middle of this thing are going to make an unusually serious and intelligent effort to make them work. The general rule is that once your boss has made a decision, it comes yours and you agree with it. You adopt it as your decision irrespective of what you may have thought before.

"The only true definition of loyalty applies in this case. Let's see whether or not in the next year, 1954, we can advance and close some of the existing gaps to obtaining a complete Joint operation."

M. W. Greene
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