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13 March 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. BROWNELL

SUBJECT: Responsibility and Command Relationships in the Production of  
Communication Intelligence (COMINT)

1. In the course of my testimony before your committee on Saturday, 8 March 1952, I stated my belief that, having adopted the principle of consolidated COMINT operations, we should continue along this line, at least until it is proved unworkable.

2. That belief is a conditional one which depends upon our ability to achieve certain things which are prerequisite to successful unified operations. Unless we can solve certain problems of authority, responsibility, organization, administration, and support, we are in danger of losing more by a consolidated operation than by a decentralized one. In other words, our attempt to cure certain evils may simply produce others which are worse. There are many angles to the question of unified versus decentralized operations, as you are no doubt aware. In my opinion, however, the basic factors affecting the operations of AFSA are those set forth in the enclosure, which I am taking the liberty of submitting for your consideration.

*Sgn*

J. H. WENGER

Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy

Enclosure - 1

Comments by RADM J.N. Wenger, USN, on  
Responsibility and Command Relationships  
in the Production of COMINT, dtd 13 March  
1952, consisting of 4 pages.

cc: DIRAFSA  
DNI (Roeder)  
DNC (Howeth)

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~~TOP SECRET~~*Unified Command*

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RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PRODUCTION OF COMINT

1. The production of COMINT, like any other undertaking, may be performed either as a single comprehensive task, or it may be broken into distinct parts, each of which contributes to the accomplishment of the whole task.

2. The principal advantages to be gained from undertaking the work as a single task are that it should:

- a. Facilitate exploitation of technical and other interrelationships of the various problems encountered;
- b. Permit greater flexibility in employment of resources;
- c. Promote joint participation in problems of common interest (e.g. air);
- d. Facilitate processing of traffic which is not readily sortable; and
- e. Minimize unnecessary duplication of effort and overhead, and thereby result in economies or increased general effectiveness.

The degree to which these advantages can be realized obviously depends upon the degree to which the various elements of the task are unified.

3. Each of the things mentioned above is also possible, at least to some degree, if the task is properly divided. For example, it may be somewhat more difficult to exploit technical relationships between two crypt-analytic problems if the work on them is physically separated, but it can still be done through proper exchange of information. Thus, the possible gains from unification are, now at least, essentially a greater measure of operational ease, operational effectiveness, and economy.

4. Although these gains are unquestionably desirable and important, and some may become vital in the future, the unification or consolidation of operations necessary for their attainment cannot be achieved, practically speaking, without a considerable price. If consolidation is accomplished in one area or at one level, and not at another, the full benefits cannot be realized, and the price then becomes relatively greater. Moreover, if we make operational or economy gains in one direction only to offset them by losses in another, the net result may be disadvantageous.

Incl with RADM J.N. Wenger, USE, memo to Mr. Brownell, dtd 13 Mar 1952

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5. There are a number of major difficulties which are likely to result from unifying any operations which support agencies that function under different authorities. Among these are:

- a. The authorities concerned may be deprived of a direct means of discharging their responsibilities;
- b. Normal channels of command or control may be disturbed;
- c. Conflicting requirements with respect to priorities and emphasis may arise;
- d. Unique requirements of any one agency may be difficult to fulfill;
- e. Serious administrative complications may result;
- f. Management problems may increase with the size of the organization and the number of agencies represented;
- g. Morale may suffer through professional incompatibilities of personnel;
- h. The demonstrated advantages of different approaches in research may be lost;
- i. Equitable arrangements for joint support of unified operations may be difficult to achieve on a mutually acceptable basis;
- j. Transfer of responsibility may be accompanied by loss of direct interest and withdrawal of support under pressure of other requirements;
- k. Internal delays may increase because of greater organizational complexity and size; and
- l. Security hazards will increase with the number of individuals having access to information.

All of the foregoing difficulties have arisen to a serious degree in connection with the operation of AFSA. Meanwhile, whether or not the anticipated gains have been achieved is at least questionable. The mere fact of the Brownell inquiry lends substance to this view.

6. Anything less than full unification must involve, in effect, either:
  - a. A division of the total task into mutually exclusive parts or

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- b. Some sort of overlap resulting in duplication of effort.

It is then to be determined whether the existing allocation of effort affords the best combination of effectiveness, efficiency, and economy that can be arrived at.

7. One of the accepted fundamental principles of good organization is that authority must be commensurate with responsibility. This means primarily possession or control of basic tools essential to accomplish an assigned job. In military organization, this relationship may be established on an operational command basis or on a support basis. If COMINT production is to be undertaken as a single comprehensive support task, it should follow that all available personnel, facilities, and other resources essential to the proper performance of the task should be organized and controlled accordingly. If on the other hand, the task is to be divided, the requisite authority and the essential means for accomplishment should be distributed in a manner fully consistent with the assignment of responsibilities. Moreover, if the divided task is to be performed efficiently and economically, the division of responsibilities must be clear-cut.

8. Unfortunately, the charter of AFSA fails to conform to these basic principles of organization. It charges the Director, AFSA, with a mission that runs the full gamut of COMINT production. This mission necessitates the direct employment of collection, communications, and processing facilities and personnel. However, the Director is given definite control of only a portion of the resources necessary and available to do his assigned job. The remainder of the resources are distributed among the three Armed Services. No specific division of responsibility among them is made, nor is any clear line drawn between what they may do on the one hand, and AFSA on the other. As a corollary of this, the Service intelligence and cryptologic agencies have not been specifically relieved of any responsibilities assigned to AFSA.

9. As an illustration of precisely what is meant by the foregoing, J.C.S. 2010 authorizes the Services to conduct such COMINT operations as may be required for direct support of their combat operations, including the production of combat intelligence. Combat intelligence is officially defined as "intelligence required for a combat situation." Obviously, this covers a lot of territory, and for each of the Armed Services it must include a very large measure of air intelligence. Similarly, both the Air Force and the Navy must have weather intelligence. Yet there has been no delineation of responsibilities to avoid duplication of effort, except in certain cases of mutual agreement by the agencies concerned. It is true that J.C.S. directives enjoin the Services not to undertake any COMINT activities declared to be the sole responsibility of AFSA, nor to undertake any exploitation outside of AFSA which will entail undesirable duplication, but the field thus reserved for AFSA has never been defined

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and the question of what constitutes undesirable duplication has not been resolved. If AFSA is to function with maximum effectiveness, it must operate under conditions that will not merely permit, but will ensure, attainment of the advantages of unification. Otherwise, only the serious disadvantages of consolidation will result.

10. Consolidation cannot succeed if the agencies concerned are not willing to surrender certain command prerogatives and give wholehearted support to the unification. If they insist that the right to produce any and all required intelligence is indispensable to command, they will largely, if not completely, defeat the purpose of unification and leave the way open for uncontrolled duplication. Furthermore, if AFSA is relegated to the status of a technical laboratory, maintained primarily for the purpose of providing technical support for COMINT operations of the individual Services, AFSA can never be the powerful operational instrument which it is technically capable of becoming.

11. Certainly, the Armed Services cannot produce all of the intelligence they require. If they are unwilling to rely on a joint agency, they must then depend on one another for at least part of it. If we grant to the Air Force complete freedom to produce all of the air intelligence it requires, we must grant the same privileges to the other Services, for the air problem is of vital importance to all of them. This might be the ideal way of achieving maximum military effectiveness from the viewpoint of combat commanders, but, even if feasible, it would be extremely costly. The only way to effect necessary savings without full unification is to establish some clear-cut and authoritatively controlled division of labor. There are various possibilities, and we must select carefully the one which promises, within reasonable and practical limits, the greatest effectiveness at the least cost.

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