

11 March 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

General Carter testified yesterday before the Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee on the U. S. S. PUEBLO. Under the Committee's new practice, copies of transcripts of the testimony of witnesses are retained by the Committee.

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the testimony on the basis of the notes which General Carter used while testifying and my recollection of what transpired. The Director began by stating that NSA desired to respond fully to provide the Subcommittee testimony in Executive Session on matters in which NSA exercises jurisdiction and which would facilitate the Committee's inquiry. The Director stated that the Committee's inquiry will necessarily enter into the signals intelligence and communications security operations and activities of the Government since a significant part of the PUEBLO's mission was to collect signals intelligence. With the capture of the PUEBLO, he said, North Korea obtained valuable signals intelligence and communications security equipment and information. The Director pointed out it was, therefore, desirable that the Subcommittee have a clear understanding of the organization of the Government for the conduct of these activities. Since NSA is the keystone of these twin efforts it was necessary that the Members of the Subcommittee be knowledgeable of NSA, its missions, and its intergovernmental relationships.

During the first hour and one-half, General Carter briefed the Subcommittee on the missions of NSA. He stated that in the SIGINT area the Director, NSA, is responsible for the direction and control of almost all U. S. resources required to produce COMINT and ELINT information in response to the intelligence requirements of national policy-makers and military commanders. He noted NSA's responsibility for producing SIGINT information in accordance with the objectives, requirements and priorities established by the U. S. Intelligence Board (USIB). He summarized the NSA responsibilities involved in the production of signals intelligence information and pointed out that about 98% of the intercept of signals is done by the military services. The Director also pointed out that NSA operated a special communications system to assure the direct and instant handling of signals intelligence and that, piggy-backed upon this system, was the special communications system that could carry critical intelligence from any part of the world to Washington in a few minutes once the critic message was introduced into this special system. The Director summarized the nature of the COMSEC mission of NSA pointing out that this mission was to produce the equipment, materials, policies and procedures

required to protect the classified communications of the Government from the signals intelligence activities of foreign governments. He discussed the relationship of the U. S. entities concerned with providing COMSEC. He noted that NSA is not in a direct line of operational responsibility for COMSEC, and that the Military Departments are responsible for organizing their own COMSEC activities. They are, however, he noted, bound by the communications security rules, regulations and standards promulgated by the Director, NSA. General Carter then pointed out that in the operation of COMSEC equipment the U. S. has assumed that the equipments are subject to compromise. Our design effort is based on that premise and the security of U. S. communications is guaranteed by the daily changing variables which NSA supplies to all users of cryptographic equipment. These variables produce a completely different cryptographic cipher for each period of use and these periods never extend beyond 24 hours. General Carter showed the Members samples of the kind of daily changing variables which were on board the PUEBLO and pictures of the cryptographic equipment. He explained how the keying variable (the key cards, rotors) can be changed so as to control the encipherment and decipherment processes.

The Members of the Committee appeared to be most receptive to the General's briefing on the role of NSA in the conduct of SIGINT and COMSEC activities. In the next part of his briefing, General Carter pointed out that most U. S. COMINT and ELINT collection and processing activities have been placed under NSA operational and technical control, but that there are exceptions. He explained that operational control involves "what" to do while technical control involves essentially "how" to do it. He stressed that command control does not rest with NSA, noting that this remains the responsibility of the authorities owning the collection platform or facilities. The Director pointed out that excepted from the operational control of NSA are those COMINT facilities and resources required to satisfy, by direct and immediate support to the commander in the field, the tactical intelligence requirements of the unified and specified commanders. However, NSA does maintain technical control over these operations. He then explained the other types of COMINT activities which are excepted from NSA's control (EW, rescue, clandestine). In the ELINT area, he explained that NSA exercises technical control of ELINT collection and processing and operational control over almost all ELINT activities except those which are essential to provide immediate support to commanders who plan and conduct military operations.

Continuing his briefing, General Carter pointed out that different facilities are used in signals intelligence depending upon the task. He summarized the criteria for the use of land-based, airborne and seaborne resources against

various targets. As to the seaborne SIGINT effort, he pointed out that the technical research ship is dedicated to SIGINT collection. He explained that these large ships have an on-board capability to process the intelligence and to collect it and to report it, and are considered a national rather than a direct support resource, while the smaller trawlers, such as the PUEBLO, are known as environmental research ships and have less of an intercept capability and a smaller processing capability than the technical research ships. He noted that the trawlers are designed primarily for direct support missions.

With respect to the PUEBLO operation itself, General Carter pointed out that the patrol was conducted in response to U. S. Navy direct support requirements and that the platform was under the operational control of CINCPACFLT. He stated that the PUEBLO was a multisensor platform and that SIGINT was one important aspect of the mission. NSA's general role, he explained, was to provide SIGINT technical guidance and assistance upon the request of the Navy. He reported that NSA was advised of the scheduled patrol by the Navy at the time of the Navy's proposal to the JCS in early December 1967, and that CINCPACFLT had solicited from NSA secondary tasking assignments for the mission to be conducted. In late December 1967, he said, NSA supplied secondary tasking collection requirements to the Navy and separately commented to JCS on SIGINT reflections of actions taken by the North Koreans in reaction to past reconnaissance efforts. He indicated that a further action of NSA was to notify the U. S. SIGINT field stations in the Pacific area associated with the Korean targets of the mission of the PUEBLO, which the JCS approved in early 1968, and to request that they report any reflections of North Korean reaction to the PUEBLO. General Carter pointed out that the SIGINT collected at the time of the capture indicated clearly that the PUEBLO was in international waters at the time of seizure. He added that there was no SIGINT evidence to indicate that the ship had ever penetrated territorial waters.

The Committee Members questioned General Carter on the nature of the messages transmitted by NSA concerning the PUEBLO and had General Carter read into the record the message sent by NSA to the Navy in which NSA supplied the secondary tasking requirements for the PUEBLO, as well as the message which NSA sent to the JCS on the North Korean reactions to past reconnaissance efforts, and the message NSA sent to the U. S. field stations requesting them to report reflections of North Korean reactions to the PUEBLO. In response to the Chairman's question as to whether there was any documentation to cover the secondary tasking by NSA of the PUEBLO, General Carter quoted from the message of CINCPACFLT requesting such tasking.

Committee Members were interested in the nature of the command and control exercised by the Navy over both the commander of the PUEBLO and the

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officer in charge of the SIGINT detachment. The Members desired to be informed if the messages of NSA were actually received by the commanding officer of the vessel as well as by the commander of the SIGINT detachment. The Director indicated this information could be provided by the Navy.

The Members of the Committee were interested in General Carter's assessment of the SIGINT/COMSEC damage resulting from the capture of the men and materiel of the PUEBLO. General Carter pointed out that a task force from the Navy and NSA had participated in the debriefing of the crew of the PUEBLO, and that extensive data compiled has been reviewed in detail. The SIGINT/COMSEC assessment is nearly complete, he said, and he gave the Members his general conclusions. He pointed out that the indications are that the North Koreans obtained extensive information on SIGINT efforts of the U. S. against the North Koreans, the Soviet Union, Communist China and North Vietnam. He noted, however, that the effective exploitation of this information is, of course, contingent upon a successful translation and interpretation by the North Koreans and their Communist allies of the documents and materials captured. He reported that the North Koreans did make certain operational changes in their communications following the capture of the PUEBLO, but that these measures cannot be conclusively tied to the capture, although the clear inference is that the changes did result from the capture of the PUEBLO. He said that there have been no changes detected in Russian or Chinese communications other than those normally expected, but admitted that it is reasonable to assume that some of the documents and material captured from the PUEBLO have been turned over to the Soviets and possibly to the CHICOMS. The great danger here, he said, is that the Soviets and CHICOMS also could improve their communications security as a result of obtaining direct knowledge of the extent of U. S. penetration of their respective communications as disclosed in documentation used by the PUEBLO to guide its planned operations to intercept Soviet and North Korean communications. Remarking that full exploitation by the Communist powers will take some time, General Carter stated that the complete SIGINT impact is not yet measurable.

With respect to the cryptographic damage assessment, General Carter said that the PUEBLO carried 4 types of cryptographic equipment, associated keying materials, maintenance manuals, and operating instructions, and the general COMSEC publications necessary to support a cryptographic operation. Also on board, he said, was keying material for the months of November and December 1967. He further advised the Subcommittee that the debriefing indicated that the destruction effort for the equipment, keying material and instructional publications had been generally ineffective. In addition to

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undestroyed copies of messages aboard the ship at the time of capture, General Carter said that the keying materials acquired by the North Koreans would enable them to read certain U. S. traffic for November and December 1967 and through January 23, 1968, if these otherwise unreadable U. S. messages had in fact been recorded and stored by the North Koreans and if they were able to reconstruct the machine and its logic. The Director stated that it was doubtful that the North Koreans maintained such an extensive SIGINT program but that the Soviets and even the Chinese may have this capability. He stressed, however, the fact that all U. S. cryptographic keys had been changed immediately and that there is no danger of compromise of U. S. communications after 23 January due to the losses incurred in the capture of the PUEBLO. General Carter added that while communications security depends essentially upon keying variables, the compromise of U. S. cryptographic logic could be of benefit to Communist cryptologists in forecasting future U. S. developments. Moreover, he noted, some of the engineering technology incorporated into our cryptoequipments could well be appropriated to increase the operations and the overall communications security of the Communist bloc's next generation of cryptographic hardware. No doubt, he said, at least the North Koreans have acquired some advanced technological data. Upon completion of the damage assessment, Chairman Pike recessed the Committee until 2:00 pm., at which time General Carter was requested to return.

The afternoon was devoted to elaboration of the points in the morning briefing. The Committee was interested in such matters as General Carter's evaluation of the detailed statement of the Navy on the compromise evaluation; NSA regulations on the security of SIGINT and COMSEC materials, their handling and destruction; and more details on the damage assessment; the role of NSA in joint reconnaissance planning; and details of the NSA messages relating to the PUEBLO patrol.

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