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6 June 1968

TALKING PAPER

On 13 May 1968 I provided the USIB with a report containing an assessment of the loss of the USS PUEBLO. In response to this report Admiral Taylor sent me a letter which asked several questions concerning the PUEBLO and expressed interest in having me discuss "corrective measures that might help limit damage and avoid a repetition of such serious potential losses."

I will first try to answer Admiral Taylor's specific questions and then turn to the overall matter of corrective measures being taken to limit future loss such as the PUEBLO.

Admiral Taylor's Questions

Why were such documents as "Soviet Missile Operations, Launches and Related Activities", [redacted] and the publications on CHICOM Communications Systems and [redacted] activity included amongst the documents aboard on this mission?

The documents mentioned are SICR's (Specific Intelligence Collection Requirements). [redacted] ("Soviet Missile Operations, Launches, and Related Activities", CHICOM Communications Systems" and CHICOM [redacted] Activity");

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[redacted] of these SICR's were given to the PUEBLO by NSA or its field offices. I don't know specifically why these documents were on board - perhaps General Carroll or Admiral Flucky may wish to comment - but it may be as was the case with related technical documents provided by NSA, that they were chosen because the PUEBLO was equipped to collect Soviet telemetry, and the PUEBLO was charged with monitoring Soviet fleet activity which could include cruise missile capability. As you can see, it had been the practice to provide technical support documents on all aspects of the mission, although there might have been only slight possibility that they would be required. As I will note again later, I have taken steps to change this approach in NSA and to drastically reduce the holdings of SIGINT reference material to only that which is specifically pertinent to the immediate mission; all other reference material is being retained ashore.

We don't know how others select materials for use by collection platforms but the selection of SIGINT reference materials for the PUEBLO was made by analytic elements of NSA and by [redacted] on the basis of the six-month schedule of the PUEBLO's activities. This schedule was announced by CINCPACFLT in December 1967; however, it had been known at NSA earlier, and a collection was made of Working Aids, COMINT Technical Reports and manuals which would be useful to the members of the SIGINT detachment aboard.

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These material., as in the past, were given to the Assistant Director, Naval Security Group, for forwarding to the PUEBLO's point of embarkation.

What action, if any, is being taken to insure that similar sensitive publications, not directly relevant to the mission have been removed from other technical research ships which might be seized?

Immediately after the PUEBLO capture, ^IDIRNSA requested that DIRNAVSECGRU review specific NSA-originated documents not absolutely required for the mission and that they be removed from their on-board document holdings. This has been accomplished for all Technical Research Ships. Additionally, DIRNAVSECGRU is currently preparing an instruction which will establish a policy on the types and quantities of documents to be carried aboard mobile SIGINT platforms. In January 1968 the CNO also directed all Technical Research Ships to off-load material evaluated not absolutely essential and not covered by previous NSA requests. TRS's were directed to 1) return all cryptographic keying material except that months effective key and two months ROB; 2) forward to the appropriate NAVSECGRU area

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director all cryptologic materials not definitely required for mission tasking; and 3) carefully screen and reduce to a minimum all other classified material.

Admiral Taylor also expressed the view that the "fly away" team to interview COMINT personnel, which I mentioned in my report, should include a representative of the DCI - I certainly support his wish to have one of his people included in the arrangements. As you may already be aware, Rufe, Oplan CINCPACFLT 99-68 provides for the debriefing of PUEBLO personnel. Upon learning of the development of the plan I requested that NSA be included in planning arrangements and SIGINT personnel from the Navy and NSA are being provided to accomplish the cryptologic/cryptographic damage assessment. (DIRNAVSECGRU is sending 9 persons, DIRNAVSECGRUPAC-4 and I am sending 9. The Navy is providing 31 interviewers for the team.) I note that there is no provision in the Oplan for CIA participation, however, I think that this is an action which you can take up with CINCPACFLT directly, Rufe. I noted from the Oplan distribution list that DOD/PRO, your CINCPAC contact point, has a copy of the plan.

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I would like to turn at this point to a brief discussion of additional corrective measures that have been taken to limit future damage which could result from the capture of exposed platforms or units which hold SIGINT materials.

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On 31 January 1968. I sent a message to the three SCA's and their respective field headquarters, requesting an immediate inventory of all SIGINT documents for all Mobile Platforms. My message said, in part: "Request you insure that technical material carried on board a SIGINT platform continue to be limited to that considered absolutely essential to the accomplishment of the particular SIGINT mission. Documents not essential to mission, but which might be useful on subsequent missions, should be retained for issue to platforms as required." The SCA's were quick to comply.

In March of this year, I expressed concern (to the three SCA's and CMC) over SIGINT holdings in exposed areas, and asked for information on "...inventory controls in effect at Direct Support Units." Their response was as follows:

The NSG and CMC advised me that the unit in Da Nang, South Vietnam, held a minimum amount of Category II material, and was complying with pertinent directives.

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ASA advised that they had reviewed general security procedures, that DirectoSupport Units (DSU's) held a minimum amount of Category II material, and had destroyed items as soon as their usefulness was over thus, keeping their SIGINT holdings to a minimum.

The AFSM is still awaiting a reply from their Pacific headquarters, before answering our request.

In addition and perhaps a fact not generally known, is that the Navy has provided armed escort ships for some of the more sensitive TRS operations since the PUEBLO incident. The MULLER, for instance, has a destroyer escort while

The GEORGETOWN also had a destroyer escort during its recent cruise These escort actions are in addition to the Navy's action in increasing the modest armament to the TRS's and AGER's themselves.

NSA has also prepared two draft changes to pertinent MUSSO documents which are now being coordinated with the SCA's. These will require the forwarding of SIGINT document inventories from all SCA sites and would include all documents issued by DIRNSA, Service Cryptologic Agencies, their subordinate elements, and other U.S. agencies or activities. This action was actually initiated by NSA in July 1967 in a request to DIRNAVSECGRU concerning the need to have on hand an inventory of all SIGINT

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documents aboard Technical Research Ships. Because of the length of the inventories DIRNAVSECGRU recommended that DIRNSA establish a central machine accounting system for this purpose. A Document Control System has been formulated and the system is currently being evaluated aboard the USS BELMONT and USS GEORGETOWN.

In the past the concept for AGER direct support operations has allowed for a diversion of any mission to cover short-notice, high priority requirements. To ensure proper technical support for such eventualities, which would very likely preclude a return to port, SIGINT support materials had to be available at the commencement of a long patrol. It must now be recognized that if security is to be properly accomplished that diversion of a shipborne platform will, from now on, be considerably curtailed by adherence to our guidance to the SCA's on limiting SIGINT holdings aboard such a platform. We are conducting further review of the problem with the SCA.

In other related action, recently concluded is a JCS study, dated 10 May 1968, entitled: Seaborne Intelligence Collection Platform Study Group Report. This study examines the total seaborne intelligence collection effort in detail including the rationale for the need, a review of the intelligence yield, and an assessment of the risk factors.

There also is a Top Secret HVCCO report in the "green"

prepared by the J-3, for the Joint Chiefs of Staff entitled: Peacetime Reconnaissance and Certain Sensitive Operations Directive (U). The matter of TRS and AGER, plus ships operating in sensitive areas is covered extensively. NSA has participated along with DIA and the Military Departments in the development of this overall study which consolidates and updates, under one basic management directive, information and guidance pertaining to peacetime military reconnaissance and sensitive operations necessitated by the Deputy Secretary of Defense guidance to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The report in short covers every aspect of the many reconnaissance programs and operations conducted by the U.S. Since finalization of the report I understand that a Navy statement of nonconcurrence, dated 28 May 1968, has been received by the JCS.

In summary, I feel that there has been positive action taken in developing corrective measures which will be helpful in avoiding a repetition of a loss such as suffered with the USS PUEBLO. The NSA policy to hold shipboard classified material to an absolute minimum for the specific SIGINT mission, may result in a less effective scheduled SIGINT operation and will undoubtedly hamper SIGINT operations when the ship is diverted to a non-scheduled contingency mission. However, the actions now being taken are positive ones that will help in limiting the potential damage through such a loss in the future.