

17 FEB 1949

Issue of Converter M-209 to Foreign Nations
Director of Intelligence

Lt. Col. Hiscr/147 Ext 462

Director of Logistics
General Staff, U. S. Army
ATTN: Ch, Foreign Mil Aid Br

1. Informal advice indicates that it is presently planned to ship a small number of the Converter M-209 to Turkey to permit instruction of Turkish military personnel in the operation of this equipment. This Division believes that the policy under which this equipment is made available to foreign nations through the various aid programs should be reexamined.
2. The Converter M-209 is a low echelon, non-registered cipher device used by the U.S. Army below division level and is still a standard item of issue. During the past war the Converter M-209 was issued to allied troops, including the French, Brazilians, and Mexicans, and, since the war, has been furnished in token quantities to various South and Central American countries through military aid programs. In no case since the war have sufficient devices been issued any foreign nation to supply its tactical organizations. From information available it appears that the equipment has been used for instructional purposes at foreign communications schools.
3. It is an accepted principle that the provision of security equipment and procedures for military communications of any country is a matter of concern to that country alone, except during wartime when requirements for inter-allied communication may dictate the need for modification of the principle, in which case special cryptosystems are provided. Particularly in peacetime, it is unwise to give wide dissemination to our security procedures since it permits a potential enemy to prepare himself to handle our wartime communications. Were security methods static, possible harm would be minimized; however, this is not the case since, as the art develops, procedures improve and the ideas are incorporated in the training literature. If this literature is widely disseminated to friendly foreign nations, then the chances of a potential enemy knowing our latest methods are vastly improved. The only defense against this situation is to strictly limit the dissemination of such information.
4. It should be pointed out that cryptographic documents used below division level must be given a low enough classification to permit their issue to and use by troops. Storage facilities in the lower echelons will not permit general issue of documents classified higher than RESTRICTED. With respect to the M-209 itself, it is a copy of a commercial equipment which can be purchased from a manufacturing concern in Sweden, and therefore does not require classification.
5. The method of operation of the M-209 as used in the U.S. Army is a purely U.S. development. Instructions obtained with the Swedish device are nowhere near as complete nor do they provide as secure encipherment.
6. The cost of the commercial device, comparable to the M-209, manufactured in Sweden is approximately \$250.00. The U.S. manufactured approximately 112,000 of the devices during the past war with a lead time requirement of approximately one year. Upon completion of the contract the tools, dies, and fixtures used in the manufacture of the equipment were destroyed. Available information indicates there are approximately 32,000 M-209's in Z/I depot stock. The T/E of an infantry division calls for the issue of 117 of the device.
7. It is apparent from the above that present stock quantities of the Converter would permit no large issues of this equipment to foreign nations and still

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retain an adequate war reserve for our own forces. Due to the high commercial price per unit it is unlikely that any foreign nation would find it economically feasible to outfit its armed forces from the Swedish source.

8. No advantage can be seen in training foreign communications specialists in the use of an equipment if they will not have the equipment available during their normal duty, particularly since U.S. communication security is jeopardized and the security of communications of the foreign nation is not improved.

9. In view of the above, this Division recommends:

a. That the Converters now on requisition by the American Mission for Aid to Turkey not be issued.

b. That, without prior approval of this Division, no further issue of the Converter M-209 or associated instructional documents be made to foreign nations or to military missions for instruction of foreign military personnel.

/s/ LCM
LIONEL C. MCGARR
Col, GSC
Assistant Executive

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD:

This correspondence is a reexamination of the U. S. policy permitting the issue of the Converter M-209 to foreign nations under the various Arms aid programs. It recommends that no further issue of the device be made without prior approval of the Director of Intelligence.

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