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Secrecy 7

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

June 17, 1948

The Bristol Company
117 Bristol Road
Waterbury, Connecticut

Attention: Mr. G. T. Evans

Gentlemen:

Secretary Forrestal has asked that I write you on behalf of the National Military Establishment as a whole, about a matter of concern to the Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force. As a result of their participation in the communication security activities and operations of the Armed Services during the last war, thousands of persons came into possession of classified information concerning the communication (signal) security equipments used by the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. Most of that information still is and must obviously remain in a classified status for reasons of national security.

The great majority of the persons mentioned above are no longer members of those Services nor connected in any way with the Government. Some of them may have inventive types of mind and may conceive ideas for improved or new security equipments which they may propose for possible development by commercial firms, such as your firm, in the hope that their exploitation would be of commercial interest and value. In a few cases some of these former members of the Armed Services are now employed in commercial research laboratories or in manufacturing firms, and it may be part of their assigned duties to suggest new ideas for security devices or to make inventions in this field. The great majority of such persons certainly would be entirely innocent of any intent to injure national security and would vehemently reject any thought of such intent. Nevertheless, even without intent to injure national security, it is possible that serious harm might result if technically sound communication security devices, employing principles based upon or derived from a knowledge of U.S. classified equipment, became public property, ultimately reaching foreign powers. The development of such equipment by your company without request from one or more of the military Services might also prove to be a loss in both time and money since many of the principles concerning cryptographic devices are on file in the Patent Office and, because of their SECRET nature, must remain unissued.

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The Departments of the National Military Establishment have, of course, no desire to stifle technical progress in any field of knowledge, but where such progress clearly affects national security certain minimum controls are desirable. They have been established in the field of atomic energy, for example, but not in the field of cipher-communication, which also presents special problems and hazards to national security requiring special treatment.

It would, therefore, be much appreciated if your company would inform the Secretary of the Army, the Navy, or the Air Force, as deemed appropriate, of any proposals for new cryptographic apparatus that may thus be submitted for possible development. I should be grateful for your acknowledgement of this letter and for any comments you may desire to make. Please regard this letter as confidential.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN L. SULLIVAN

Copy to:
Secretary of the Army
Secretary of the Air Force

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