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MEMORANDUM TO: AFSA-OOB

AFSA-OOB/ef

MAY 1951

SUBJECT: Proposed measures for the increased security of COMINT

Enclosure: Analysis of papers pertaining to proposed measures for increased security of COMINT

I have made an analysis of the recent papers pertaining to the subject and submit that analysis to you as of possible interest. My comments thereon are as follows:

a. From the basic initial proposal to tighten the security measures surrounding the production and dissemination of COMINT, which proposal was apparently favorably considered by SECCOM in its first report, there has now been a significant and important departure: the second report of SECCOM not only fails to indicate what measures need be taken to tighten up on security but in fact it does the opposite. It recommends that there be a relaxation of measures surrounding certain low-level types of COMINT with a view toward flexibility of use, making the statement that adequate source protection for vital, high-grade COMINT would be enhanced by such relaxation. SECCOM undoubtedly discussed this statement in detail but no arguments or data are given in support of the statement in its report. Thus, instead of closing some doors and windows dangerous to COMINT security, as was our original aim in bringing up the matter in USCIB, the net effect so far has been to open some more.

b. I think attention should be directed most emphatically to what has happened in this matter: a complete reversal of what was intended when DIRAFSA originally brought it up. In the first place, if this second report of SECCOM is accepted and given effect, I foresee great difficulties in deciding from second to second, minute to minute, or hour to hour, whether a specific decrypt belongs to one category or the other. And in the second place there remains the primary question we brought up, the question of better protection of COMINT. We thought the present regulations for the security protection of COMINT were inadequate; but SECCOM concluded "that existing policies and practices ...are, if strictly observed, adequate to protect the most sensitive types of sources...". I do not agree, and do not think you do, either. We must be very careful what we finally decide in this matter.



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MEASURES FOR INCREASED SECURITY OF COMINT

- References:
- (a) Memorandum from Capt. Wenger to AFSA-OOT, subject: COMINT Security, dated 19 October 1950
 - (b) Report by the USCIB Coordinator to the USCIB, subject: Measures for increased security of communication intelligence (COMINT), dated 22 December 1950 (USCIB: 13/134)
 - (c) First report of the USCIB Security Committee, subject: Measures for increased security of COMINT, dated 7 March 1951 (USCIB: 13/152)
 - (d) Minutes of the 61st USCIB Meeting (USCIB: 13/159)
 - (e) Second report of the USCIB Security Committee, subject: Measures for increased security of COMINT, dated 30 March 1951 (USCIB: 13/163)
 - (f) Minutes of the 62d USCIB Meeting (USCIB: 13/167)

1. On 19 October 1950 Captain WENGER sent to AFSA-OOT a Memorandum (Reference a) in which he expressed grave concern over an apparent lessening of the security of COMINT in the face of a more pressing need for it. Pointing to World War II experience in the German problem, he indicated that experience there showed the feasibility of operating successfully with the absolute minimum of dissemination and of maintaining the utmost security under difficult circumstances. He suggested that an appropriate study be prepared for USCIB, aimed toward initiating a review of the entire security problem, and referred the problem to AFSA-OOT with the suggestion that the preliminary study be limited to four persons within AFSA: Mr. FRIEDMAN (AFSA-OOT); Captain DYER (AFSA-14); Captain MASON (AFSA-02); and Colonel PETERSON (AFSA-12). His own notes on the subject were forwarded by Captain WENGER for the consideration of this group.

2. a. Acting upon Captain WENGER's suggestion, this group from AFSA prepared for the consideration of USCIB a staff study on the problem of determining what additional measures should be taken to protect present and future COMINT sources. This staff paper was presented as a report by the USCIB Coordinator to the USCIB (Reference b). Conclusions reached were:

- (1) A review of all phases of COMINT security was warranted;
- (2) Determination whether any additional measures should be established to prevent the repetition of recent losses, which might be the result of leaks, was essential;

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(3) The increased mechanisms for the protection of COMINT which had been instituted since World War II, such as an inter-departmental authority (USCIB); a Federal protective law; improved investigative machinery; common security standards among U.S. agencies; security agreements with foreign collaborators; and a single U.S. producer of high-level COMINT.

(4) The nullification to a certain extent of these improvements by developments within the COMINT field such as:

- (a) Steady and substantial increase in workers and consumers;
- (b) Relaxation of certain dissemination safeguards;
- (c) Wide extent of administrative, control, and budgetary machinery and procedures;
- (d) Wide dissemination of results;
- (e) Absence of an over-all authority to insure observance of COMINT security;
- (f) Rapid turn-over in number of persons indoctrinated;
- (g) Presence of indoctrinated persons in combat areas;
- (h) Probability of imminent military and political collaboration with allied nations other than the British, with its consequent difficult problems.

d. In consideration of what additional steps should be taken, the COMINT security problem was divided into four segments:

- (1) Security precautions applicable to all steps in the production of information;
- (2) Format of final products (in relation to revelation of source);
- (3) Accounting control of production of copies, and of their dissemination to consumers;
- (4) Security precautions applicable to the operational use of COMINT.

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e. It was noted that under its charter USCIB prescribes basic security standards and dissemination policies and therefore has cognizance over all these aspects. It is further noted that the USCIB Coordinator, in his capacity as Director, AFSA, has full operational jurisdiction over the first of these segments, but none over the other three segments. It was therefore suggested that the USCIB Security Committee direct its study to the second two aspects and submit appropriate recommendations thereto, and that the six COMINT consumer agencies take immediate cognizance of the last segment.

3. a. On 7 March 1951 the USCIB Security Committee brought in its first report (Reference c). The problem, as stated by the Committee, was "to review all phases of COMINT security and determine what measures should be taken by USCIB to improve that security." It was concluded that a review of all phases, as had been suggested by the Coordinator's report (Reference b), was beyond the capabilities of the USCIB Security Committee, but that there were certain steps which USCIB could take immediately to achieve better security, and there were also certain long-range security plans which USCIB should put into effect. It was recognized by the Committee that absolute COMINT security requires:

- (1) Detailed and complete regulations and procedures;
- (2) Stringent enforcement of these regulations plus sanctions;
- (3) Thorough investigation of personnel;
- (4) Continuous training and security awareness by all personnel;
- (5) Good physical security.

b. The Committee recommended:

- (1) Appointment of a full-time Security Officer who would report directly to the Chairman, USCIB, and who should be assisted by a small, competent staff. Tab A to the report outlined the missions and functions of this officer;
- (2) Issue of a basic security manual establishing standards and procedures for all phases of COMINT security;
- (3) A directive to USCIB members to study the command control over COMINT within their own organizations;

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(4) Authorization to the USCIB Coordinator to control dissemination of certain sensitive categories of COMINT after approval of each category by USCIB in executive session. It was suggested that this might be accomplished by confining affected items to the premises of AFSA and nominating special representatives from each Department or Agency to inspect them there;

(5) Designation by the USCIB Coordinator, after consultation with USCIB intelligence consumers, of certain categories of material to be disseminated outside the AFSA production establishment in the form of sanitized reports, sanitization to be done by representatives of the intelligence agencies working at AFSA;

(6) Investigation of the possibility of bringing PL 513 to the attention of publishers and press representatives through a special Department of Defense press conference;

(7) A directive to USCIB members to examine and perfect plans for maintaining security of COMINT during emergencies involving the rapid expansion or large-scale moving of facilities within the Z.I. or overseas, plans to be presented by 1 July 1951.

c. These recommendations, which were in line with the paper previously submitted by the USCIB Coordinator, were expanded by a discussion in the enclosure to the report containing facts bearing on the problem and reasons for the recommendations listed above.

4. a. At the 61st Meeting of USCIB, the minutes of which are contained in Reference d, the following opinions were offered in regard to the report of the Security Committee (Reference c):

(1) STATE: Mr. ARMSTRONG was not prepared to come to a decision on the report since it was submitted 7 March 1951, two days before the meeting of USCIB. He suggested members might wish to defer consideration until the 62d Meeting.

(2) USAF: General ACKERMAN said that he had definite views which were rather lengthy, and could not be covered at the meeting.

(3) CIA: Mr. DOUGLASS asked if it would be out of order to have the Committee review its report, since the Committee members might have a different view after having talked to the Board members.

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(4) ARMY: General CANINE expressed his opinion that the Committee would have to come up with a different report, and suggested that the Committee be directed to review the whole report, stating that the Army member would be prepared to propose an alternate solution based on guidance he had received.

(5) USAF: General ACKERMAN stated that the Air Force member likewise would be prepared to recommend a different solution.

b. The report was referred back to the Security Committee for revision in the light of guidance to be furnished by member departments and agencies of the Board.

5. a. As a result of reconsideration of the problem, the Security Committee prepared and submitted a substitute report (Reference e) in the form of a preliminary report, with individual members of the Security Committee requested to obtain the view of their Board members prior to further action by the Committee. In this paper the following conclusions were reached:

(1) The first report (Reference c) did not meet the requirements for increased security of COMINT because it was too cumbersome, complicated and restrictive to permit reasonable application to the present wide variations in types of COMINT;

(2) From a security standpoint, there are two broad general categories of communication intelligence:

(a) That for which source protection is a paramount consideration;

(b) That for which source protection is an important but not over-riding consideration;

(3) Existing policies and practices are, if strictly observed, adequate to protect the most sensitive types in the first category;

(4) Existing U.S. Governmental policies and practices provide adequate source and information protection for much COMINT under the second category;

(5) Rigid regulations designed for maximum source protection, when applied to the less sensitive types of COMINT, block basic intelligence, deny field commanders necessary flexibility in their use of COMINT, and endanger the more sensitive sources;

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(6) With the advice and assistance of AFSA, the USCIB Intelligence Committee and the USCIB Security Committee should determine what portions of COMINT fall in the two categories, and recommend precise security provisions for each.

b. With this entirely new approach to the problem, the USCIB Security Committee recommended a draft letter to LSIB asking for a conference to modify Appendix "B" to the BRUSA Agreement in order to increase flexibility in the use of information derived from low-grade ciphers and plain text, and to enhance the prospect of being able to provide adequate source protection for vital, high-grade COMINT. The draft letter mentions the "relaxation of some of the special provisions applied to certain categories of COMINT, wherein source protection is not an over-riding consideration."

6. Apparently this basic change in approach was recognized by some members of the USCIB at the 62d Meeting, the minutes of which are contained in Reference f, for at the meeting the Chairman referred to the second report of the Committee (Reference e) and explained that it represented a basic change in approach, and called attention to the fact that, if the report were approved, a re-draft of Appendix "B" to the BRUSA [redacted] Agreements would be required. He stated that an Ad Hoc Sub-committee had been appointed to prepare a study with reference to the categories of COMINT falling outside the periphery of code-word protection. Views favoring the report were expressed by certain of the Service members: General CANINE stated that the Army view was that "any thing which made COMINT more available to those who had a 'need to know' was a definite step in the right direction." He spoke of the need for a "yardstick" to determine which material should be downgraded and which not. Admiral ESPE thought that the report seemed a "logical and sound approach to the problem". The Chairman then approached the crux of the problem, remarking that the report proposed what he considered to be a very interesting and important change but that it "appeared to be a question whether an increase or decrease in risk would result from allowing access to a larger number of people." The decision reached was to have the Security Committee proceed with its determination of the categories of information and recommendations based on a more detailed analysis of the proposals contained in the last report. These recommendations were to be submitted to USCIB for consideration.

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