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26 May 1952

GENERAL OPERATING AND CONTROL PRINCIPLES FOR PROVISION OF COMINT SUPPORT*1. General Operating Plan

a. To accomplish the U.S. COMINT mission there will be established throughout the world a number of intercept, D/F, and RFP activities (hereinafter referred to as intercept activities), so located and controlled that they can intercept the maximum amount of desired foreign telecommunications, locate and identify the sources of the emissions, record the traffic transmitted, perform preliminary processing as necessary and feasible, and forward the traffic to designated processing activities as required.

b. Initially, the intercept activities will be organized into three main groups, each controlled and directed by a control center with associated processing activities. One group will operate in the Western Hemisphere under the main control and processing center, a second group will operate in the European-North African area under a sub-center, and the third group in the Pacific-Far East area under a sub-center. Technical back-up for the intercept activities will be furnished by the control centers and processing activities in accordance with their assigned tasks. Technical control of all activities will be exercised from the main control and processing center.

c. The control and processing centers will consolidate and analyze the material obtained and reported by the intercept activities, exchange the results, and convey them to the appropriate authorized recipients as required.

*The definitions in the J.C.S. Dictionary of U.S. Military Terms for Joint Usage (June 1950) and in Joint Action of the Armed Forces (FM10-5 JAAF AFM 1-1 dated September 1951) are applicable.

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d. In addition to the foregoing, there may be certain decentralized field activities as required to facilitate operations or to provide close support for military operations.

e. Adequate communication channels will be provided whereby material collected by the intercept activities can be promptly conveyed to the proper control centers and processing activities, and whereby processing results can be forwarded to appropriate recipients on a timely basis. Communication channels will also be provided for necessary control directives and for exchanges of technical material among COMINT activities. The Joint Principles for Communications prescribed in "Joint Action of the Armed Forces" shall apply in regard to the provision, operation, and control of the aforementioned channels.

2. Operational Control

a. For purposes of control of military COMINT activities, the Director shall have the status and authority of a unified commander.

b. Operational control of all COMINT activities will be exercised by the Director, except as delegated by him on a revocable basis to other authorities under circumstances hereinafter indicated. He will normally issue necessary operational directives directly to control centers. In accordance with these directives, control centers will assign operational missions and specific targets for coverage directly to subordinate activities. The Director may also issue operational directives direct to these activities. Operational matters which require administrative action at control and processing centers or intercept activities will be referred to the administrative authorities concerned.

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3. Administrative Control

a. Intercept activities will normally be uni-Service and will be under the administrative control of the authorities providing them.

b. Control and processing activities may be either uni-Service or Joint, as circumstances require. Those which are uni-Service will be administered by the Services providing them. Those which are Joint will be administered by the Director to the extent necessary for the accomplishment of his mission, and otherwise by the authorities involved.

4. Security and Other Control Provisions

a. The Director will prescribe, in accordance with national policies, regulations for, and will exercise, as necessary for the maintenance of requisite security, supervisory control (including inspections) of, the distribution and handling of COMINT materials and matters directly related thereto.

b. Operational and administrative relationships within the Department of Defense not specifically covered herein will conform to the provisions of Joint Action of the Armed Forces (JFAL-5 JAAP AFJL-1) and applicable policies and directives of that Department.

5. Basic Support Principles

All COMINT functions and tasks will normally be undertaken under the operational control of the Director, except those which by their nature, or the purpose served, can be more effectively and efficiently performed as decentralized operations under delegated authority.

6. General Support

The Director will normally retain control of all COMINT activities conducted for the purpose of providing general support.

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7. Close Support

a. The Director will, for specific close support tasks, normally delegate to a unified or uni-Service commander operational control of certain COMINT units or teams within the latter's geographic area of command, when such control is desired by the commander and when all four of the following conditions obtain:

- (1) The commander has tactical command of a particular operation, or a continuing operation of a special type, with which there must be direct and close coordination of the interception and processing of traffic from forces tactically opposing the operation;
- (2) The necessary processing must be done at or near the point of interception, or the point from which the supported operation is being tactically controlled, if the results are to be of operational value to the commander;
- (3) The required COMINT can be efficiently produced on this decentralized basis within the time limits required for tactical use and without undue detriment to the satisfaction of other COMINT support requirements; and
- (4) The necessary close support cannot be provided with adequate results, or prospects thereof, by activities under operational control of the Director.

b. The Director may also delegate control as in a, above, to another authority who has a unique support requirement in other special circumstances considered by the Director to warrant such delegation.

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c. The Director will normally retain operational control of all other COMINT activities conducted for the provision of close support, especially where

- (1) global or other extensive COMINT operations involving a substantial commitment of the available COMINT resources are required, or
- (2) the required level of technical competence, the necessary special equipment, or the relationship that must be maintained with other support tasks is such as to require integration of the particular activities involved with other activities remaining under the Director's control, or
- (3) greater economy and flexibility in the use of COMINT resources can thus be achieved without appreciable loss in effectiveness, or
- (4) the raw traffic involved cannot be readily identified and segregated.

d. COMINT activities over which operational control is delegated as in 7a. above will remain under technical control of the Director and will submit operational reports as required by him.

8. Mutual Support

a. COMINT activities operating under the Director's control and those under delegated control will cooperate directly and exchange technical matter and COMINT as required by their assigned tasks.

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b. All cooperation and liaison between U.S. and foreign COMINT activities shall be under the control of the Director within policies established by the cognizant National COMINT authorities. This control may be delegated where necessary in connection with close support tasks.

c. Research and development for the support of COMINT activities will normally be conducted by the Director, with such assistance as he may require from, and as can be furnished by, other agencies.

9. Logistic Support

Logistic and administrative support for COMINT activities, based on recommendations of the Director as approved by appropriate authorities, will be provided by designated Departments, agencies, and commands.

10. Allocation and Direction of Effort

In the allocation of responsibilities to the various components of the U.S. COMINT organization, and in the direction of their effort, the following general principles will apply:

a. The major portion of the intercept resources will be reserved for control by the main center as necessary to provide the basic coverage for general support. In assigning tasks to intercept positions so reserved, due regard shall be had for the raw material requirements of processing activities associated with, and in the same area as, the intercept facilities. Additional positions will be controlled by the main center as necessary for other support tasks which it is required to perform. The remaining resources will be allocated for control by sub-centers, or other designated authorities, for supplemental general support and for the close support as may be required.

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b. Processing undertaken by the main center will be primarily that required to provide (1) general COMINT support for authorized recipients, (2) processing and other technical assistance to other COMINT activities, and (3) centralized close support in the Western Hemisphere. The sub-centers will undertake such non-duplicative processing as they can to provide additional general support and accomplish other support tasks which can be undertaken to best advantage on a consolidated or centralized basis overseas. Decentralized processing activities will perform tasks of a low-level tactical nature required for close support. In general, these close support tasks will be performed as near as practicable to interception of the traffic involved and to the operations being supported.

c. In order to minimize duplication of effort and to ensure that intercept and decentralized processing activities confine their reporting efforts to tasks which they are best suited to perform, those activities providing close support will normally be restricted to such reporting as can be accomplished within time limits specified by the Director with due regard for actual operational requirements of the supported forces.

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