

WILLIAM F FRIEDMAN

As from 310 SECOND ST SE

WASHINGTON 3, D C

11 July 1958

Major General Garrison B. Coverdale, USA,
 Chief of Staff,
 National Security Agency,
 Fort George G. Meade, Maryland

Dear General Coverdale:

Receipt of your letter, Serial N. 2940, dated 27 June 1958, is acknowledged. During the past 40 years I have always observed, and I expect to continue to observe, the strict letter as well as the spirit of the official regulations pertaining to the handling of classified matter. After such lengthy experience, therefore, to find myself in the position of having officially requested something which, as your letter clearly implies, contravenes the regulations, greatly embarrasses and troubles me. At the moment I feel that there must be some misunderstanding about the meaning or interpretation of the DOD Directive of 8 July 1957 as regards its applicability to cryptologic information in general, and, if so, that is something which I think it would be most advisable to correct without delay.

Ever since the classification RESTRICTED was eliminated by Executive Order No. 10503, effective 15 December 1953, I have relied upon the guidance of the Director, National Security Agency, in all matters regarding the handling and protection of classified documents which had been in the RESTRICTED category. I have again carefully studied DOD Directive 5200.1, considering it particularly in the light of your letter, and I now recall that when that directive came to the attention of the National Security Agency the wording or intent of the directive was construed not to be applicable to generalized cryptologic information such as is in the public domain, or to such documents which are of an official character and which pertained to cryptologic information of the eras before and during World War I. The documents which accompanied my letter to the Chief Signal Officer had been, to the best of my knowledge and belief, entirely declassified by the proper officials of the National Security Agency when Executive Order No. 10503 became effective, and I was duly informed, but not in writing, that their classification status was not altered when DOD Directive 5200.1 came into effect. I have upon more than one occasion since July 1957 sought confirmation of my understanding that those documents are in fact currently still unclassified, despite DOD Directive 5200.1, and received such oral assurance that I was left in no doubt whatsoever on this score.

Major General Garrison B. Coverdale

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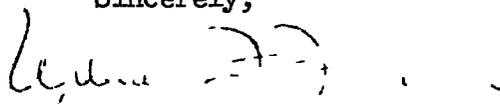
I would be grateful for official and prompt clarification of this matter, and respectfully suggest that the Director of Training be consulted to substantiate the statements made in the preceding paragraph. I hope they will explain why I did not hesitate to request what I did of the Chief Signal Officer, being desirous of receiving in writing an official statement as to the current classification of the documents which I wrote a good many years ago but which were printed during the period of my employment in his office.

I find it difficult to believe that it was the intent of those who, like myself, participated in seeking and gaining the protection afforded by Title 18, U.S.C., Section 798 (as added by Subsection 24(a) Act of 31 October 1951 [65 Stat. 719]) to prohibit or to prevent the dissemination of all information concerning cryptographic systems of days long gone by, or of cryptologic information which has long been in the public domain.

Executive Order No. 10503 became effective on 15 December 1953, DOD Directive 5200.1 became effective on 8 July 1957. It is fair to assume that in the interval between these two dates many (retroactive) "violations of security" occurred in regard to documents identical with or similar to those submitted with my letter to the Chief Signal Officer. It therefore may be a little late to do very much in the way of applying security measures for the protection of copies in the possession of all military personnel, reservists, and ex-reservists who are resident all over this country, or are temporarily stationed abroad, since I do not believe that records were kept of the recipients or holders of these documents either before or after Executive Order No. 10503 went into effect. However, as regards the copies in my possession, I shall, of course, comply with the directive contained in the last sentence of your letter and the documents will be stored in the 3-combination government safe at my home on loan for the storage of classified material.

Finally, I wish to thank you for your letter and for holding, pending my return to Washington, the now regraded documents which accompanied my letter to the Chief Signal Officer and which I hope I will be permitted to collect and store with the other similar documents now in my possession

Sincerely,



William F. Friedman

cc: C Sig O