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OPS 5

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND

Serial: N 0629
17 FEB 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(ATTN: General G. B. Erskine, USMC-Ret,
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense,
Special Operations)

SUBJECT: Development of Advanced Intelligence Collection Programs (U)

REFERENCES: (a) DOD Memorandum to NSA, Subject as above, dated 19 January 1961.

(b) NSA Memoranda to the Service Departments, Subject: DOD R&E Programs in COMINT and ELINT (C), copy to OSO/OSD, dated 4 December 1959.

(c) DDR&E Memorandum to NSA, Subject: DOD R&E Programs in COMINT and ELINT (C), dated 27 May 1959.

1. The National Security Agency is actively engaged with the Military Departments, in several R/E programs to determine the feasibility of collecting COMINT/ELINT from satellites. All of these programs are subject to continuing review and approval by the DDR&E, and are not operational systems.

2. NSA's experience with the Military Departments in the field of COMINT/ELINT intercept to be conducted from satellite vehicles suggests a need for clarification of Director, NSA's responsibility and authority to task COMINT/ELINT resources, even when these resources are satellite borne, and whether the satellite is an operational or a test and evaluation vehicle. In addition, clarification is required for Director, NSA's responsibility in connection with the research and engineering of COMINT/ELINT packages for installation in satellite vehicles.

3. The Director NSA's responsibility for determining what COMINT/ELINT facilities will best satisfy intelligence requirements, is interpreted to mean that he must exercise approval authority over Service COMINT/ELINT R&E plans and programs prior to approval review by the Director, DR&E.

4. From an R&E viewpoint, NSA responsibilities and authorities are as cited in reference (b) and (c), the essence of which is as follows:

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a. The NSA will issue to the Military Departments appropriate program guidance for COMINT/ELINT research and engineering. NSA will obtain periodically from the Military Departments their views as to the adequacy of this guidance.

b. The Military Departments are to keep the NSA advised on a timely basis of their COMINT/ELINT and any related research and engineering projects that are under way or intended to be initiated. (Reference (a), para 3 addresses itself to an example of inadequate coordination).

c. Semiannually, the National Security Agency will consolidate Service COMINT/ELINT R&E projects with those of NSA and forward the consolidation with comments and recommendations of the Director, NSA, to the Director, DR&E. (Third report is to be published in March 1961).

5. It is believed that NSA's authority and responsibility in the development and use of COMINT or ELINT applications of satellite vehicles (e.g. satellite COMINT/ELINT collection packages) are identical with his authority and responsibility for other COMINT/ELINT research and development, collection and production activities. These are:

a. Acting on behalf of the intelligence community in the interpretation of intelligence requirements, and in the determination on specific collection tasks to be conducted, the Director, NSA, will:

(1) Determine the adequacy of existing facilities (including satellite COMINT/ELINT collection packages), and as appropriate, provide for the development of more advanced facilities.

(2) Assign tasks, as appropriate, to all operational facilities (including satellite vehicles).

(3) Task, as appropriate, the COMINT/ELINT collection capability of ESV's undergoing test and evaluation.

b. As the above authority and responsibility relate to and complement those of the Director, DR&E, the Director, NSA, will:

(1) Plan and program the COMINT/ELINT R&E to be undertaken in satisfaction of production requirements.

(2) Define the nature, scope and priority of the COMINT/ELINT facilities (including intercept packages in ESV's), to be developed through NSA or Military Service R&E, and provide requirements and guidance to the appropriate Military Departments.

(3) Review all COMINT/ELINT R&E systems in the initial planning stages in order to determine the potential collection capability of such systems, and accordingly approve, modify or disapprove.

(4) Consolidate all NSA approved COMINT/ELINT R&E projects to be undertaken throughout the Defense establishment and forward to the Director, DR&E, for final R&E program approval.

(5) Provide for the procurement, operation and exploitation of the approved R&E COMINT/ELINT system, in the appropriate Service Cryptologic Agency budget and program. (Except for such direct support activities as may be approved by the Secretary of Defense).

(6) Provide technical guidance and support to government and industrial organizations engaged in the research, engineering, design and fabrication of satellite COMINT/ELINT systems.

6. If your office concurs, it is requested that the Director, NSA's authority and responsibility as outlined above be promulgated to the Military Departments.

L. H. FROST
Vice Admiral, USN
Director

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cc:	DIR	R/D-04	PROD	COSA
	AG	SIND	PROD-03	COSA-04
	Reading File	ANEQ	PROD-04	STED
	OPS (2)	ENGR	PROD-05	
	R/D	RADE (2)	GENS	
	R/D-02	REMP	GENS- 6	

M/R: The above letter utilizes the recent SECDEF letter (reference (a)) to clarify relationships between the DDR&E and NSA vis-a-vis the Departments of the Air Force and Navy. The distinction outlined is intended to point up the unique authority of the DIRNSA in the area of operational planning and tasking in the field of COMINT/ELINT collection (Direct support excepted) as opposed to DDR&E program review authority in the R&DT/E aspects of the national COMINT/ELINT effort. Further the distinction is intended to clarify the authority of NSA in the field of satellite COMINT/ELINT tasking.

R/D feels that it does not now have the R/D authority from DDR&E to approve or disapprove Service programs. However, it is most important that R/D review plans for developments in their initial stages (much before system fabrication). R/D concurs that NSA should seek OSO/OSD opinion.

It should be realized that implementation of these responsibilities will require additional high-caliber staff personnel and possibly additional funds.

It is intended ultimately that CIA be informed of NSA responsibility (1) to determine the best facilities available to effect COMINT/ELINT collection insatisfaction of valid intelligence requirements, and (2) to review all sponsored COMINT/ELINT R&DT/E efforts (including CIA).

Coordinated with PROD (Adm Kurtz) and R/D (Mr. Barlow).

Richard P. Floyd

R. P. FLOYD/OPS/4994/16Feb61

Added M/R:

Letter modified in accordance with recommendations made by S/ASST, Mr. Rowlett.

Richard P. Floyd

R. P. FLOYD/OPS/4994/16Feb61