MEMORANDUM FOR THE MEMBERS OF USCIBEC:

Subject: Program to Improve the Communications Security of NATO Countries.

The enclosure, prepared by the Department of State member of USCIB pursuant to decision by the Board on 14 August 1953, is forwarded for consideration at the Sixth Meeting in connection with Item 3.

Enclosure

State Department Memo to Executive Secretary, USCIB
dtd 17 Aug 53.
MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, USCIB

SUBJECT: Program to Improve the Communications Security of NATO Countries

REFERENCE: USCIB 23/70

1. The proposals presented in this memorandum are submitted in response to the decision of USCIB, at its Eighty-eighth Meeting on 10 July 1953, that the Department of State should be the cognizant US authority with respect to certain preliminary steps contained in the Report of the recent US-UK Conference on the Communications Security (COMSEC) of NATO Countries. These proposals have been approved by the Secretary of State. The specific preliminary steps which they concern are the determination of (a) the nature of the initial approach to the French and (b) the terms of reference and composition of the Combined (US-UK) Working Group to be set up in Washington to facilitate coordination of this program.

2. Considerations affecting the initial approach to the French.

Enclosure with USCIB: 14/313.
c. It will be imperative that all contacts made within the French Government are secure and are given adequate authority.

d. The Tripartite Security Working Group (US-UK-French), which has been in existence since 1950, would appear to offer the best means of achieving an orderly and secure arrangement for direct discussion between the proper COMSEC authorities of the three governments. Although the work of this Group has not heretofore included COMSEC matters, the Group has developed cooperative and secure contacts among responsible French authorities in general security matters.

3. The initial approach to the French. To assure wholehearted cooperation by the French in sponsoring jointly with the US and UK the overall program for other NATO countries and in making effective improvements in French COMSEC, the French Government should be approached first at the cabinet level. The project should then be assigned to the Tripartite Security Survey Group to establish proper contact between COMSEC authorities of the three governments. As a practical matter, and as a means of achieving the greatest possible compulsion, this approach should be undertaken jointly by US and UK representatives.

a. Phase 1. At the cabinet level the French Government should be requested by the US and UK ambassadors to agree in principle that the overall security of NATO requires that a broad program be undertaken to improve the security of the national communications of NATO countries, and that this program should be initiated through the Standing Group as a logical extension of the existing COMSEC program of the NATO organization itself. This improvement should be accomplished by the promulgation of minimum COMSEC standards to be adopted on a NATO-wide basis. To this end the terms of reference of the Tripartite Security Survey should be extended to include the preliminary development and application of these standards on a tripartite basis. This phase should be handled by the Department of State and the Foreign Office.

b. Phase 2. The Tripartite Security Working Group should then set up a technical sub-group to be composed of appropriate COMSEC authorities selected by the Tripartite Security Group.
Security Working Group and authorized by their respective
governments to represent all COMSEC activities of these
governments. This phase should be handled by selected
members of the US and UK Tripartite Security Teams as
agreed between the participating agencies.

c. **Phase 3.** The COMSEC authorities should then proceed
to develop minimum COMSEC standards and to apply them
within the three governments. US participation in this
phase should be handled by the National Security Agency (NSA).

4. **The Combined (US-UK) Working Group.** To assure that the
COMINT aspects and limitations of this program are properly co-
ordinated, the Combined Working Group should be under the direction
of USCIB and LSIB. It should serve to:

a. coordinate US and UK proposals for the initial
approach to the French, subsequent technical discussions,
preparation of a memorandum to be issued by the NATO
Standing Group and formulation of minimum security
standards;

b. coordinate between the US and UK conclusions as
to the status of the COMSEC of NATO countries as this
program develops; and

c. coordinate US and UK recommendations for further
steps, as envisaged in paragraph 23 of the Conference Report,
should this program not accomplish the desired response from
NATO countries or improvement in their COMSEC.

The US element of this Group should also serve as an ad hoc subcom-
mittee of USCIB to keep this entire program under continuous review
for the Board. To this end, US participation should include
appropriate representatives of the Department of State, NSA, FBI and the Office of the Secretary of Defense. The overriding
political character of the initial phases of this program indicates
that the US element of this Group should be headed by its Department
of State member.

5. It is recommended that the plan described in paragraphs 3 and
4 above be referred by USCIBEC and USCIB for approval and implementation,
including presentation to appropriate UK authorities.

(Signed)

W. PARK ARMSTRONG, JR.

**TOP SECRET CANOE**