Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of the Civil War Committee on Portuguese Communication Security

Held: Pentagon, 27 July 1951, 1300 hours

Present: Mr. William F. Friedman, AFSA, Chairman.
Capt. Joseph N. Wenner, USN, AFSA.
Col. Gordon E. Dawson, USA, ID.
CDR Mark T. Little, USN, IVATO.
Mr. William Harvey, CIA.
Mr. Winston Scott, CIA.
Mr. Robert F. Packard, Department of State.

The CHAIRMAN stated that because of the
shortness of time since the last meeting, 26
July, the minutes of that meeting were not
available. He had brought to the committee
revision of the draft report incorporating
the changes agreed upon at the
previous meeting and asked the members
to review these briefly for comment.
A detailed analysis of the changes in the report adopted by the Committee are contained in the Appendix.

Subsidary remarks by Committee. With regard to paragraph 12 some discussion was held concerning the meaning of the last paragraph of the message of 6 July. Mr. FRIEDMAN said that the Portuguese Ambassador appeared to be fearful of the security of TYPEX system itself. CDR LITTLE pointed out that this was true only in part because the Portuguese British had compiled the system design instructions for the type. Mr. SCOTT remarked that the sending of this material by wire at all was a violation of security regulations and perhaps the Portuguese Ambassador did not wish the British to know that he was sending the message by cable.

Mr. FRIEDMAN asked Capt. WENGERT for his interpretation and Capt. WENGERT said that it seemed to him that the Ambassador was suspicious of the security of the machine and that it was contrary to NATO instructions to use a machine not secure. CDR LITTLE stated that there was no basis in any NATO document for such a view. Mr. BAVER suggested that more was being read into the message than was actually there. The basic inconsistency was difficult to say what the Ambassador meant, but it was in any case a basic misinterpretation related to have sent it by cable at all. The matter was sharpened by the fact that the material sent was classified COSMIC and had no national comment. Col. DAWSON intimated that in his opinion if the Portuguese Ambassador in London
was achieved, one of the main reasons being, that it was felt, that the secret interpretation of the message must await a change in the situation.

Mr. Harvey then noted that the pressure of completing the report had been removed, and that the meetings caused by, if necessary, continued the next week. The Chairman and members of the Committee agreed that this was most welcome, since a solution to the problem appeared long far from easy to obtain.

Mr. Friedman then presented the Committee with the two draft outlines which he had drawn up. Enclosure "A", a long-term program for the introduction of remedial measures for the general improvement in the accuracy of NATO communications, and Enclosure "B", a short-term program for immediate remedial measures to correct the insecurity of NATO communications. He asked that members of the Committee consider Enclosure "B" first. Mr. Harvey questioned first of all the necessity for allowing the approval by the National Security Council of USAF's recommendation as regards to French communications, and especially the advisability of tying this matter to the question of French communications. Col. Dawson agreed with this and expressed the opinion that each case should be judged on its own merits.
Copk: WENGER asked what effect such a decision would have upon the British in view of their relations with the Portuguese. Mr. SCOTT admitted that the question was difficult, but pointed out that in this instance the matter under consideration was NATO communications rather than the national security of a country. Mr. PACKARD remarked that the basic concept was the same in both cases, i.e., the attempt to convince these nations that their cryptography was poor. Mr. PACKARD attributed this slowness of the British in bringing these matters to the attention of U.S. authorities to a policy of waiting to see what the U.S. would do when confronted with a situation parallel to that with which the British were confronted in the case of the French. CDR LITTLE remarked that in the case of French security, three nations were involved: France, Great Britain, and the United States, whereas in the present instance a violation of NATO security regulations involved 12 countries. The seriousness was therefore compounded. Mr. SCOTT remarked that the British have urged that the measures taken in regard to security should be undertaken country by country. Mr. PACKARD then asked whether in the general instance the U.S. was limited to the violation of NATO security regulations and whether it could help correct the situation.

Mr. FRIEDMAN remarked that there was a matter which USAF should decide. Copk: WENGER noted that a limitation of the incident to a violation of NATO security regulations
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Cpt. WENGER noted that in the long-range plan for the improvement of NATO communications, two steps had already been taken, the eventualities of which we were already prepared to accept.

(2) The U.S. is committed to the improvement of French communications, including the elimination of

Cpt. WENGER presented and noted that it was clear that we must look forward to the eventual elimination of... general approach to the NATO nations on...

The following lines then are reports that there is a reluctance among the NATO member nations to use TYPEX. The chief reason has been...

This system has been chosen for NATO and COSMIC communications because there is definite evidence from World War II... and there is little evidence that TYPEX is secure. Member nations are therefore eager to use TYPEX. After the general approach to NATO, the Pentagons themselves might an approach on problems peculiar to themselves. Dr. FRIEDMAN then added that such an approach might be facilitated by the fact that there is now...
To Captain WENGER's suggestion that the matter be kept in the dark of a possible violation of NMT security regulations and referred to the Standing Group, it was pointed out that this would involve the presentation of evidence to the French member of the Committee and consequently might not be useful. Most certainly the French Government of this fact. Mr. Butler thought that the approach should be affected with the approval of the National Security Council. Mr. Harvey stated that if there were required, the NSC approval would be contingent upon their attitude toward the problem of French security and that this could not be used as a short-term remedial measure.

Mr. PACKARD then discussed for a some length on to the Department of State, pointing out that although the information was often known in Washington and elsewhere, some time was in newspapers, nevertheless it was...
in assessing the reliability of nations and their good faith in carrying out commitments. He also reminded the Committee that there was no real hope for success in political matters in so large and loosely organized a group as NATO, but that there was hope to keep military facts and planning. In his opinion the very secrecy for political communications had weakened its use for military. The PACKARD concluded-

The meeting adjourned to reassemble Monday 30 July at 1415 hours.