

REF ID: A671179

~~TOP SECRET~~ - SECURITY INFORMATION  
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17 June 1952

ITEM OF  
AGENDA

SUBJECT AND COMMENT

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U.K./U.S. Communication Security Conference, 1952. - The Report of the Conference is now forwarded by me, as Chairman of the Conference, for the consideration of AFSAC and that body's decision as to forwarding it to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for U.S. approval.

There are several points to which AFSAC's attention should be specifically invited:

1. In par. 3 of the Report, reference is made to the agreement in regard to the immediate CCM problem. Improved security will be obtained by certain changes in the present CCM and in the methods of using it. These changes are expected to insure sufficient security in the present CCM until a proper replacement will be provided, which will be done as soon as practicable. Work on the new CCM will proceed as soon as a reply is received from the British Chiefs of Staff to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum SM-1309-52 dated 28 May 1952 (a JCS 2074/14).
2. Par. 8 of the Report establishes what may be considered as a new policy so far as the U.S., but not so far as the U.K. is concerned. The U.K. policy, for several years at least, has been to place U.K. COMSEC interests ahead of their COMINT interests. The U.K. formulated and applied this policy in 1949, when they proposed furnishing the Western Union Powers with U.K. Typex machines; they now are proposing to extend this policy to the whole of NATO. The U.S. representatives to the Conference just ended have concurred in the U.K. policy, preferring to leave the COMINT implications and probable repercussions on U.S. COMINT interests to the consideration of higher U.S. authorities.
3. Par. 9a, b, c, and d, if approved by the U.S. and U.K. authorities, will place in the hands of non-BRUSA NATO governments details of construction and exemplars of certain high-security crypto-equipments. It would mean that the U.S. and the U.K. would lose control over them and that the principles and details of construction of potentially powerful defensive weapons would probably fall into enemy hands, perhaps to be used against us later. Included in these equipments are:

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ITEM OF  
AGENDASUBJECT AND COMMENT - Continued

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a. AFSAM 7	(U.S.)	} Literal Cipher equipments
b. AFSAM 47	(U.S.)	
c. PORTEX	(U.K.)	
d. AFSAM 36	(U.S.)	
e. ROLLIK I	(U.K.)	} Teletype Cipher equipments
f. MERCURY	(U.K.)	
g. 5 U.C.O.	(U.K.)	
h. SIGTOT	(U.S.)	
i. ROCKEX	(U.K.)	

4. Particular attention is invited to the proposal to release the U.K. MERCURY equipment to non-BRUSA NATO governments. This apparatus employs the crypto-principles of the J.S. SIGABA/ECM, the release of which to the U.K. has constituted a point of long argument and contention among U.S. authorities, as well as between U.S. and U.K. authorities ever since 1942. It has developed and it is now perfectly clear that not only have the British known and understood the crypto-principles on which the SIGABA/ECM are based, as they have consistently maintained since 1947, but also they have constructed at least 50 MERCURY machines embodying those principles. In fact, the U.K. MERCURY equipment is much more secure than the U.S. SIGABA/ECM or the CSP 2900, so that from a realistic viewpoint there is certainly no longer any logic whatever in continuing to regard the latter J.S. equipments as "unmentionable" so far as the British are concerned. The much more important point now to consider is whether the U.S. should concur with the U.K. authorities who wish now to release the crypto-principles of SIGABA/ECM to non-BRUSA NATO governments.

5. In view of the COMINT implications of such a proposal as the latter, as well as of the proposal to release the details concerning the other equipments listed in par. 3 above, it is suggested that the Report of the U.K./U.S. Communication Security Conference, 1952, be forwarded to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff with the recommendation that before approving the Report of the Conference the points brought out in par. 4 above be referred to USCIB for discussion and recommendation as to whether the U.S. should concur in releasing all the equipments proposed for release, including the U.K. MERCURY equipment.

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