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Office Memorandum

• UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO AFSA-OOT

DATE 25 Oct 1950

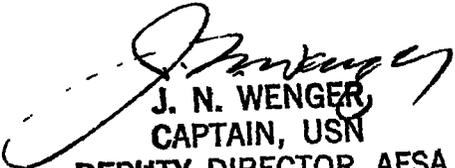
FROM AFSA-OOB

SUBJECT

With reference to the memo on COMINT Security that I recently gave you, I think the fewer involved in the study at this time the better. In view of this, I suggest that you, Dyer, Mason and Peterson confer. The four of you have as much technical and intelligence background as can be mustered in any small group and I think you should be able to come up with some sound and practical ideas.

cc:

Captain Dyer (W/O incl)
Captain Mason (W/Incl)
Col. Peterson (W/Incl)



J. N. WENGER
CAPTAIN, USN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AFSA

Declassified and approved for release by NSA on 05-23-2014 pursuant to E.O. 13526

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AFSA-OOB/jow

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19 October 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR AFSA-OOT

SUBJECT: COMINT Security

1. I am becoming increasingly concerned over what appears to me to be a gradual lessening of the security of COMINT in the face of a more pressing need for it. While a number of important and basic steps have been taken since the war to establish security on a firmer foundation, other developments have occurred which have, to a large extent, nullified the effects of our advances.

2. It is my conviction that nothing is more important to our future success in COMINT that the reestablishment of security safeguards, such as were in force in connection with the German problem during World War II. In my opinion, the experience we had with that problem amply demonstrated the feasibility of operating successfully with the absolute minimum of dissemination and of maintaining the utmost security under difficult circumstances. To me it is a complete contradiction of the frequent contention that effectiveness is inevitably defeated by too strict compartmentation of activities and limitation of dissemination.

3. I believe we should prepare an appropriate study for USCIB, aimed toward initiating a review of the entire security problem. The possibility of some approach to a state of readability makes it imperative that we not delay the application of measures which will prevent a repetition of what we have suffered in the past.

4. Attached are some notes which occur to me as points that might well be included in such a study. I would appreciate your undertaking this task or at least giving me your ideas as to who else might be better able to do it and as to what else should be included.



J.N. WENGER
AFSA-OOB

Inclosure - 1

Notes for COMINT Security Study

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19 October 1950

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NOTES FOR COMINT SECURITY STUDY

PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

1. Since the war we have seen a steady tightening of [] Communication Security. All high-level systems which were solved and exploited in the normal manner have been withdrawn from use.

2. Of the types of high-level systems still in use by [] one is unreadable and the other has been read fragmentarily to a very limited degree. In the latter case, work has been surrounded by the most stringent safeguards and virtually no dissemination has been made of end products.

3. Meanwhile there has been a steady and substantial increase of both workers and consumers. The indoctrinated list has risen from 594 in February 1947 to 1,332 in June 1950. In addition, there have been innumerable individuals brought into the fringe of knowledge for administrative, budgetary, or other reasons.

4. Aside from the foregoing, certain dissemination safeguards have gradually been relaxed. Material is now distributed and maintained in a number of areas in Washington outside the producing agencies, where it was never permitted before. Moreover, distribution has been authorized to additional agencies. Restrictions on the distribution of material to, and maintenance in, occupied areas have also been eased.

5. In the face of all this, the demand for COMINT has become increasingly great and the need for its protection imperative. We have now been virtually out of touch with [] high-level communications for three years. If we should regain contact and then lose it again we are likely to be denied this vital source of intelligence for a much longer period.

6. Since the war, the basic essentials for effective security control have finally been established after years of effort. We now have:

- a. A federal protective law
- b. Security agreements with our foreign collaborators
- c. Improved investigative machinery
- d. An interdepartmental authority (USCIB)
- e. Common security standards
- f. A single U.S. producer of high-level COMINT (AFSA).
- g. General appreciation of the value of COMINT

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7. We have not taken full advantage of these recent assets. Among other shortcomings, are the following:

- a. Too much individual authority and discretion are left to individual consumer and producer agencies to insure uniform application of adequate security measures. (The security control of atomic energy information is more centralized and rigid.)
- b. There is no over-all authority to insure observance of security regulations. (Inspection authority such as that which was exercised by the Cryptographic Security Board might well be vested in USCIB.)
- c. There is far too wide dissemination of results. (Over 1,000,000 copies of COMINT translations, ~~were disseminated~~ in September, 1950. The handling of the German problem proved that COMINT can be effectively used even with the most drastic restrictions on dissemination.)
- d. The administrative, control, and budgetary machinery and procedures are such that large numbers of individuals must be apprised of numerous details of COMINT activities. (The large number of agencies, offices, boards, and committees concerned with the operation and administration of COMINT activities necessitates innumerable reports, justifications, etc., which are very hazardous to security. The arrangements governing the operation of CIA are much more conducive to secrecy.)

representing some 16,000 individual decrypting messages,

Under such conditions, the laws of chance are bound to operate to produce inadvertent leaks even though loyalty may be unquestionable.

8. In addition to taking such measures as may be practicable to correct recognized deficiencies, consideration should be given to the feasibility of disseminating high-level decrypts as special plain text products or in other disguised form which will not readily reveal the exact source.

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