

USCIB: 13.5/80

24 August 1954

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE MEMBERS OF USCIB:

Subject: Possible Compromise of COMINT Information.

Reference: USCIB 13.5/66 dated 20 May 1954.

The enclosure, which was prepared by the Chief of the Technical Information Division, NSA, after examination of his rather extensive clipping file on this type of thing, is circulated for information and possible future reference.

  
RUFUS L. TAYLOR  
Captain, U. S. Navy  
Executive Secretary, USCIB

Enclosure  
Analysis of Compromise.

USCIB: 13.5/80

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1. The reference paper has been examined for the purpose of ascertaining the accuracy of statements made by Walter H. Wager, who writes under the pen name of John Tiger. Data appearing both in the article written by Mr. Wager and in his interview with a representative of the Department of Defense have been checked against an extensive collection of COMINT disclosures.

2. It is possible to state that Mr. Wager's article was written, as he remarked, "with a certain amount of liberality," mainly from newspaper clippings and magazine articles. The article is actually a curious rehash of information that has been republished frequently in open media during the past fifteen years. Items which could not be found as disclosures, e.g., Russian weather codes, are indicated by the author to have been picked up in conversation. This is entirely credible. From the opening paragraph with its reference to the mysterious Colonel X (apparently Mr. William F. Friedman), to the final paragraph with its educated guess that the "Magicians" are still engaged in cryptanalysis for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the article runs the gamut of accuracy, distortion, and falsity. These characteristics are ordinarily the hallmarks of unauthorized COMINT disclosures. To them has been added the ingredient of Mr. Wager's fertile imagination, and the result has been, as the Executive Secretary, USCIB, remarks, "a damaging aggregate."

3. The principal source of material for Mr. Wager has been the article which appeared in Colliers of October 28, 1950. The frequently-repeated COMINT disclosures of the past decade are here - MAGIC as revealed in the Pearl Harbor investigations, Midway, OSS agents breaking into the Japanese embassy in Lisbon, the shooting down of General Yamamoto's plane, usage of the Hagelin cipher device, and many others. Mr. Wager states frankly that he has access to several newspaper morgues, admittedly powerful sources of information.

4. It is interesting to note Mr. Wager's narrowness of thought and restricted research by his concentration on the Army Security Agency as the Nation's chief provider of COMINT. No hint appears of Air and Navy activity, nor of AFSA or NSA.

5. The impression gained here is that Mr. Wager talked truthfully in his interview. His article, however, is the output of a versatile writer who has embellished his research data with considerable color by the free exercise of literary license.

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