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AFSAC: 73/3

EO 3.3(h)(2)
PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

7 December 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR MEMBERS OF AFSAC:

Subject. COMINT Collaboration.

1. The question of whether the United States intends to collaborate with allied nations (other than the [redacted] in the collection, processing, and dissemination of communication intelligence material appears to warrant serious consideration and study, on a priority basis, in view of:

- a. The present world situation.
- b. The broad scope of current negotiations in connection with NATO planning.
- c. The consequent likelihood that either the U.S. or the [redacted] may at any time be approached with offers of or requests for collaboration in the COMINT field.
- d. The international complexion of any NATO or UN forces which will be engaged in any potential hostilities with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

2. A prerequisite to the resolution of this question will be a determination of the extent and mechanics of world-wide U. S. collaboration with the [redacted] in wartime Combined Headquarters at Theater and lower levels. Obviously, this must be based upon a firm U.S. global COMINT structure, the planning for which should be undertaken without delay.

3. While the recent [redacted] COMINT Conference was in the planning stages, the [redacted] proposed that certain global questions be considered as items on the agenda. The USCIB Coordinator indicated that U.S. authorities were not prepared to consider these global matters formally, but were agreeable to informal discussions of these and other points which the [redacted] Conferees proposed to take up.

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4. These informal discussions were held and brought to light certain points in the British approach to the problems. With respect to [redacted] wartime collaboration, their thinking appeared not to have progressed beyond the point of raising questions. However, with respect to wartime collaboration with third parties, the [redacted] had reached certain tentative conclusions, which are summarized in Enclosure 1.

5. During the course of the informal discussions, it became apparent that the [redacted] will suggest another conference to consider these and related matters next Spring. In order to be sure that U.S. national interests are maintained in meeting the proposals which the British may advance at that time, it is considered essential that AFSAC sponsor immediately the consideration and study necessary for the Services and AFSA to arrive at a firm U. S. position on these problems. Some of the primary considerations, as seen from the U. S. point of view, are set forth in Enclosure 2, which seeks merely to present the problem without offering a solution.

6. It is therefore recommended that AFSAC designate an ad hoc committee to prepare:

a. A plan for U. S. global COMINT structure in wartime.

b. A global plan for [redacted] COMINT collaboration in wartime.

c. Recommendations regarding [redacted] COMINT collaboration with third parties in wartime.

7. That USCIB be kept informed and consulted, as appropriate concerning these matters.



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Director, Armed Forces Security Agency

AFSAC: 73/3

ENCLOSURE 1

IMPRESSIONS OF [] THINKING WITH RESPECT TO
WARTIME COMINT RELATIONS WITH THIRD POWERS

1. It will not be possible for [] forces to fight with forces of a third power under an integrated Headquarters Staff without making some [] COMINT available to officers of the third power.

2. In a Theater containing [] (or Combined []) COMINT units as well as COMINT units of a third power, it will be advisable to promote technical cooperation among such units.

3. Before allowing release of either intelligence or technical information, the [] should enforce upon the third power satisfactory security rules for the handling and use, at all levels, of intelligence and technical information from all sources.

4. It therefore follows that the [] should prepare agreed security regulations governing all COMINT matters, and have them accepted by all countries with whom we may have COMINT dealings in wartime.

NOTE It is believed that these statements adequately summarize the current opinions of [] COMINT authorities. It is not believed that they have finished exploring the problems, nor that these are necessarily the views which will be officially presented to the U.S. at the next conference.

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Enclosure (1)

ENCLOSURE 2

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CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING WARTIME COMINT COLLABORATION

1. In view of the close [redacted] collaboration since the early days of World War II, it is not anticipated that the beginning of future hostilities would present any fundamental policy problems in this respect. However, important decisions must be reached as to the means of implementation of such collaboration. For example, plans must be drawn up which will answer, among others, the following questions:

a. To what extent will processing centers (National, and Theater and field) be combined [redacted] centers?

[redacted] b. To what extent will intercept units be combined units?

[redacted] c. Will dissemination be effected through combined outlets?

d. In localities where combined centers and units are not advisable or feasible, what arrangements can be made for cross-dissemination?

e. Where, specifically, will Theater centers be established?

2. On the other hand, it is considered almost a certainty that combined command, with integrated staffs, will predominate within the field forces during any future conflict with the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is logical to assume that officers of many nationalities will be serving in capacities that demand their access to COMINT to enable intelligent and efficient performance of their assigned duties. If this assumption is accepted, it raises a series of questions relating to the method of disseminating COMINT at all levels of combined forces:

a. Shall each nation disseminate its own COMINT to its nationals, denying it to other allied nationals [redacted] (agreements excluded)?

b. Shall each nation disseminate its COMINT to authorized recipients of all allied nationalities?

c. Shall dissemination be effected through a combined summary containing the results of all allied COMINT Centers which is made available to authorized recipients of all allied nationalities?

3. Due to the present existence of COMINT centers within the territory of some of our probable allies, [redacted] in particular, and their knowledge of the benefits of such organizations, it is highly probable that the United States will at any time be requested to permit allied collaboration in the collection and processing of COMINT. The extent and degree of collaboration that would be requested can not be predicted at this time. It is conceivable that considerable pressure could be exerted to obtain complete technical collaboration. If this be true, it is quite possible that the United States authorities may not consider complete technical collaboration as the most desirable solution. It is essential to consider at this time what degree or extent of technical collaboration we shall permit in the collection and processing of COMINT material. This determination should extend to all COMINT producing centers from the National Center (AFSA) down to the smallest unit so engaged. To wait until the actual outbreak of hostilities on a global basis before establishing adequate safeguards and policies could well be fatal to the COMINT effort.

4. Another aspect of the problem is that of security standards to be prescribed for allied nations should collaboration be authorized. Such standards as are determined to be essential for the protection of this material should be made a prerequisite to collaboration to any extent. Since any negotiations with allied nations along these lines are likely to reveal past successes of our COMINT effort it is considered that careful planning and preparation are essential. Therefore, it is desirable that the minimum security standards that would be acceptable to the United States be determined, and that guidance be furnished as to the most feasible approach in conducting negotiations with the nations involved.

5. It is considered that the problems raised herein should be initially considered by the Department of Defense as the Department with primary interest in military collaboration. Resultant recommendations should be referred by AFSAC to USCIB, as the National authority dealing with the security and foreign exchange of COMINT.

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Enclosure (2)