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CONTAIN CODE WORD MATERIAL~~

Ser. 00058

4 Mar. 52

~~TOP SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION~~MEMORANDUM FOR MR. GRANT HANSON:SUBJECT: COMSICO, History of

1. In accordance with your request, there is enclosed herewith a brief history of the COMSICO concept and of the various actions which followed its official presentation for consideration.

2. The history, as set forth in the enclosure, begins with a paper prepared in March 1949. That is because it deals with a concept of evaluation and dissemination to which the name COMSICO was applied. However, the idea of a joint evaluation and dissemination center for military and naval COMINT antedates the COMSICO concept. Therefore, a brief history of events prior to March 1949, dealing with this phase of COMINT integration will probably be of interest, and will be summarized in the next paragraph.

3. Beginning on 18 August 1945 and extending through the end of the year, correspondence was exchanged between the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and the Chief of Naval Operations, relative to the merging and integration of the COMINT activities of the two Services. Pertinent to that correspondence is a memorandum dated 22 August 1945 from the Chairman of the Army-Navy Communications Intelligence Board to General Marshall and Admiral King, in which it is stated that the Board reached unanimous conclusion:

"(a) That...after merger of Army and Navy Signal Intelligence activities are effectuated all results be disseminated as joint Army-Navy product."

4. In a memorandum dated 18 September 1945 to General Marshall, Admiral King set forth three basic principles inherent in his approval of the memorandum referred to under subparagraph a. above:

"(a) That there should be ... joint evaluation and dissemination of strategic, non-operational intelligence."

"(b) The Navy must maintain complete and independent control of the production, evaluation and dissemination of naval operational intelligence."

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"(c) The Navy's physical facilities for the production of communication intelligence cannot be consolidated into a single physical unit with Army Signal Intelligence facilities."

g. In his reply, 25 September 1945, General Marshall accepted the first of these three principles but stated that the second and third "appear to me to remove the practical basis essential to achieve effective coordination."

h. It is unnecessary here to go further into the foregoing correspondence and the long discussions terminating in the creation of the Armed Forces Security Agency. That is a different story. But I wish to continue a bit in this memorandum with the rest of the Marshall-King correspondence having a bearing on the first of the three principles cited in subparagraph b. above, since that one certainly forms a part of the background history of the concept of a COMSIC.

i. On 2 October 1945 Admiral King:

"noted that we agree that the control and dissemination of Navy and Army operational signal intelligence should be exercised by the service concerned. In addition, I believe the following principles have already been implemented or agreed upon:

* * *

"(d) Strategic non-operational signal intelligence should be evaluated and disseminated as a joint product."

Admiral King went on to say:

"I feel that the Navy's complete and independent control of its production, evaluation, and dissemination of naval operational intelligence is essential to naval command."

j. On 10 October 1945 General Marshall replied:

"1. After reading your memorandum of 2 October I am convinced that a joint COMINT evaluation center would be ineffective unless in the same center there were combined all other types of Army and Navy intelligence."

"2. It seems to me that the best solution for improving not only the effectiveness of COMINT but to resolve the entire question of Army and Navy intelligence organization would be for us to combine in one location, under joint control, all Army and Navy intelligence effort, personnel and direction including all of the product of the COMINT...."

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3. On 7 November 1945, in his reply to General Marshall, Adm. King stated:

13. I concur in your proposal ... insofar as it is practicable to do so and still retain to each service control of those matters essential to the effective employment of its forces. For this reason it is necessary that the Navy retain those functions which relate to Naval operational intelligence required for the exercise of naval command. This includes cryptography, which for the Navy's purposes, must be integrated into the communications service rather than into the intelligence service.

14. Subject to the above, I agree that intelligence should be a joint matter. I suggest that an ad hoc committee be appointed to work out a program on the above basis for our further consideration.

15. I share your view that our program should be worked out in a manner to permit the armed services to cooperate fully with the State Department in the formation and operation of a central intelligence agency, should one be established."

4. On 8 December 1945 General Eisenhower, General Marshall's successor as Chief of Staff, wrote to Admiral King:

16. It appears from your memorandum of 8 November that you agree that certain phases of Army and Navy intelligence should be a joint matter but that you feel it necessary for the Navy to impose certain limitations upon the functions of any joint intelligence agency. General Marshall's proposal was based upon the premise that there should be no such limitations, and that there should be complete integration of all intelligence activities, including cryptanalytic activities.

17. As you know, the Secretaries of State, War and Navy recently appointed a committee to investigate and report upon the advisability of the formation of a central intelligence agency. Any action which this committee may take will naturally have a substantial effect upon the proposal for merging Army and Navy intelligence activities. It therefore seems appropriate to defer action upon the mutual problems of the two services until the result of the committee study has been announced."

5. On 28 December 1945 Admiral Higitz, Admiral King's successor as Chief of Naval Operations, in reply to General Eisenhower, stated:

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1. I regret that you feel it appropriate to defer further action upon mutual problems of the Army and Navy communication intelligence activities pending result of a study by the State-Navy Committee as to the advisability of the formation of a Central Intelligence Agency.

2. You are correct that reference (b) imposes limitation upon joint effort in the field of communication intelligence, but only to the limited extent therein stated. It is essential for the Navy to retain under its control those communication intelligence functions paramountly related to naval operational requirements and the exercise of naval command. This is true regardless of the extent of joint effort by the two services and, likewise, regardless of the extent of control which may otherwise be exercised over the field of intelligence generally by any interdepartmental joint intelligence agency which may be created.

3. It has been the consistent hope of the Chief of Naval Operations, as expressed in reference (b) and in former memoranda on this same subject, that joint discussions continue with due regard for the above mentioned limited restriction. I still feel that this should be done. Should you, however, as stated in reference (a) still wish to defer further action upon our mutual intelligence problems until the final result of the study by the State-Navy Committee, I reluctantly concur."

4. The entire problem was thereupon taken up again by the Army-Navy Communications Intelligence Board and then by a special board. For our purposes it is unnecessary to go into these discussions, and merely say that when NSA was finally established, and with State, CIA, and FBI as members of USCIB, the concept of a central evaluation and dissemination unit for all COMINT was eliminated. It is doubtful that the unanimous conclusion of ANCIB, quoted in subparagraph a. above, was overlooked by mere inadvertence. Consequently, early in 1949 I took up the question with Col. Carter W. Clarke, then Chief, Army Security Agency.

a. One of the factors which motivated me in bringing up the question and which is briefly referred to in paragraph 3c of Section I of the enclosure, was my growing concern over the large number of copies of decrypts being produced to meet the stated requirements of the consumers. I felt that the situation would soon get out of hand and present serious risk of loss of copies, only one of which might jeopardize our most important sources. The situation has indeed become serious.

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b. The gravity of the security hazards coincident with the enormous number of copies of code-word material being produced and disseminated currently can be gauged by considering the following sample statistics:

	1951				1952
	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN
(1)	12,588	15,424	14,192	9,958	12,588
(2)	6,953	7,493	7,087	5,919	9,948
(3)	1,545,293	1,842,150	1,822,344	1,379,287	1,719,093

Line (1) No. of translations of plain-text intercepts.

Line (2) No. of translations of decrypted intercepts.

Line (3) Total No. of copies of translations of both categories.

(NOTE: The appreciable decrease from November to December was the result of the Christmas Holidays.)

c. The total number of copies produced is staggering - even greater than the figure I gave the Board at the meeting on 22 February 1952. Some of these copies consist of several sheets of paper, each bearing the code word designator.

5. a. In my opinion, these statistics alone should be a source of worry to all of us. An important reduction in the security risks might result from an arrangement whereby such wholesale reproduction and dissemination of COMINT products would not be necessary. A COMINT working within AFSA precincts, or a "Reports Group within AF A" would certainly help in this respect, leaving out of consideration other advantages which might accrue in the way of producing better and more current pictures of the international scene, as reflected in COMINT.

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b. In this connection I call your attention to the current dissemination policy and practice at [] not because I am convinced that what suits British needs should also suit our requirements but as a matter of information and possibly food for thought. Dissemination of individual COMINT decrypts and translations is on a very strict, extremely limited basis at [] and, moreover, it is largely determined and controlled by [] itself. The guiding principle is the "need to know," with strict interpretation. For instance, an item relating to atomic energy would be disseminated only to their equivalent of our AEC. At the beginning of each year there are discussions between [] and the consumer agencies, the latter indicating in broad terms their minimum requirements in this respect. From time to time thereafter, by liaison visits by COMINT personnel to the consumer agencies, these requirements may be clarified or amended. Generally, only one or two copies of a decrypt ever leave [] the largest number never exceeding half a dozen. Occasionally, in the case of a particularly valuable report based upon decrypts or translations more copies may go out but never more than 7 or 10. It is

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to be noted that what has been said above applies only to what is done at [] many reports using COMINT and collateral are produced within the consumer agencies and disseminated by them but I do not know at the moment how many copies are made or disseminated. That is a responsibility of the consumer, not of [], but I daresay [] has something to say on that score, too.

5. We learned recently that similar very stringent rules are followed by the [] COMINT organization,

6. I still believe in the COMINT idea but wish to make it clear that I do not think it should be performed by NSA - only that, for security reasons, it would be best if it could be performed on or within NSA premises, so that the original bits and pieces never need leave those premises. A unification of COMINT processing without some sort of unification of evaluation and dissemination appears illogical; in fact, it might have been more logical to begin with a unification of evaluation and dissemination along COMINT or similar lines, and then follow it with a unification of COMINT processing. In short, maybe we have here an example of a hysteron-proteron, and if you do not know what that is, look it up in Webster. We have an Anglo-Taxon equivalent but it does not sound as nice.

6. It is advisable that I invite your attention to the fact that this history of COMINT is not an official document, although it is based upon official sources and is accompanied by certain appendices which are official documents. I will also add that the comments contained in the preceding paragraphs of this covering memorandum represent my personal opinions. They do not necessarily reflect the views of any of my colleagues or superiors.

ENCL-1
History of COMINT

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

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