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MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL TAYLOR

Subject: Ultra and the U.S. Seventh Army

1. Introduction: The following report summarizes the experience of the Seventh U.S. Army in the use of ultra intelligence between 15 August '44 and 8 May '45. The judgments, conclusions, and recommendations are based solely upon work with that command and are not intended as generalizations necessarily applicable to either air or other ground commands.

2. Operations: The SCU/SIU link and ultra specialist joined the Seventh Army at Naples, and the station opened on D plus 1, the 16th of August. It had been agreed with the G-2 that the job of the ultra specialist was to receive signals from the SIU, process them, and post the information on a map. For the first few days of operations in South France, the only map available was a folding map which was shown periodically to the G-2. During this period the quality of ultra intelligence was unusually high and in the rapidly moving situation was the primary source of tactical information. The G-2 decided, therefore, that an ultra war room was desirable, and henceforth the ultra specialist occupied a room in the CP adjacent to the G-2. Also during these early days the volume of ultra was so great that it was soon apparent to the G-2 that he could not personally brief his commander on the content. Accordingly, the responsibility for the briefing of all recipients devolved upon the ultra specialist.

At no time during operations by the Seventh Army was there a formal briefing for all recipients. There can be little doubt that formal briefings are desirable for they permit a more careful preparation of the material. But the recipients were not amenable to the idea because it involved an additional commitment of time in their already busy day. Also, the demands of the tactical situation dictated that important ultra intelligence be disseminated to recipients without delay, and any other information was of insufficient importance to justify formal briefings. The typical method by which ultra reached the recipients was as follows: Each morning the G-2 was briefed on the messages received during the night. If in his judgment the information was important, the Commanding General and/or the Chief of Staff were called in and the briefing repeated. Throughout the day, usually after dinner and again after supper, the G-2 was briefed on later messages. Other recipients were briefed throughout the day whenever they found it convenient. At any time during the day or night an important message was passed to the G-2 without delay. In the absence of the G-2, the ultra specialist was authorized to call any message directly to the attention of other recipients if the information therein warranted such action.

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1 WS Date: 10-18-78

The ultra specialist was expected to be currently familiar with information from other sources, but at no time was it desired that his briefings include a merging of ultra and other information. This distinction was closely drawn by the G-2, both for reasons of security and because the merger of all sources of information was accomplished in other ways. At the Seventh Army the chief of the order of battle section was a recipient and the "opening up" of ultra was his primary responsibility. Estimates of the enemy situation were prepared by still another officer in the combat intelligence section, and ultra was injected into these estimates of enemy capabilities by informal consultation with the G-2. Target information derived from ultra provided no problem for it had been agreed between the G-2 and the A-2 of XII Tactical Air Command, supporting the Seventh Army, that all ultra targets would be handled by the Air Force. With order of battle, estimates, and targets provided for in the above manner, the remaining ultra required little or no correlation with other information.

Attached hereto as Tab A is a statement of two instances in which ultra provided intelligence of extreme tactical importance to the Seventh Army. All recipients were genuinely interested in ultra and aware of the tremendous advantage provided by source. On one occasion the G-2 remarked, "You know, this just isn't cricket."

Generally, ultra information is of primary value in a static or defensive situation; this is indeed true of all information and intelligence derived therefrom. In the attack and pursuit, intelligence has done its job during the planning phase of the operation, and subsequent information is usually outdated by the time it reaches the command. The examples in Tab A, however, cover both situations.

3. Security: It is difficult to really know the security situation at a command, but it was evident that some recipients at Seventh Army were either not cognizant of or sufficiently impressed with the need for security in the use of ultra. There was little questioning the minimum security requirement that the nature of source must not be disclosed, but this understanding did not extend to an appreciation that information derived from source must be properly safeguarded and serve only as the basis for tactical orders when the information itself cannot be "opened up". The greatest misunderstanding here was in the idea of "cover". Recipients were inclined to believe that cover was an invention; the idea of cover as an indication from an actual but open source was alien to all but a few recipients.

The security situation at Seventh Army was complicated by the fact that the G-2 of VI Corps, and at the outset the Commanding General, were former recipients at a time when the Corps was operating at Anzio as a virtually independent task force. On a few known and probably on many unknown occasions the G-2 of Army passed on "hunches" to the G-2 of Corps; the latter was certainly aware of their origin but was not bound by security regulations. In this situation it is almost impossible to expect that a Corps G-2, formerly in the picture, will not receive ultra, thinly disguised; as the Army G-2 frequently stated, "You can deny membership in the Elks to a person, but once he has been an Elk and forfeits his membership he will still remember the initiation."

Generally speaking, however, the handling of ultra from an intelligence point of view by the G-2 was consistent with security regulations. The difficulties at the command were more directly traceable to the Commanding General and in the operational use of ultra. The reasons for this are manifest.

Charged with responsibility for success or failure in the battle, the temptation to knowingly or unknowingly employ ultra improperly is well-nigh irresistible at times. This, considered along with the fact that the Commanding General is relatively isolated from daily security reminders by the ultra specialist appears to be the major cause of violations.

Annexed hereto as Tab B are the full reports of security violations at the Seventh Army. There is little to add since they were originally reported. In all instances the method employed for ascertaining the facts was the same. Once the violation was observed, the facts in the case were obtained from the G-2 and reported to London. The G-2 was never told by the ultra specialist, although he probably guessed, that violations were being reported.

4. Conclusions: The policy of a separate channel and the assigning of an ultra specialist to American commands is basically sound. If nothing else, the mere presence of a War Department representative has a salutary effect. For reasons of administration the SCU/SLU link might well become the responsibility of the specialist. There is often a real question whether a particular security violation is the responsibility of the SLU or the specialist. Moreover the command is frequently confused in their administrative relations with the SLU, and are never certain whether they should deal with the SLU or with the specialist. There was never any difficulty of this kind at Seventh Army, but there is a real danger in the failure to provide unified control.

There is much to recommend that all ultra matters be considered within the province of the Commanding General and his Chief of Staff, rather than as an instrumentality of the G-2. In the first place, the G-2 might then be subjected to controls which cannot be exercised under the present arrangement. Moreover, by attaching the ultra function to the Chief of Staff's office, the ultra specialist has direct access to the Chief of Staff and the Commanding General and thus can more carefully safeguard security at the point where it is most vulnerable. Also, by removing the ultra function from the G-2, security is improved by the mere fact that it is not automatically associated with intelligence.

The reading and understanding of ultra security regulations is not sufficient to insure their inviolability. In addition to constant reminders by the ultra specialist, periodic warnings from high commanders seem desirable. The subject must be kept a live one at all times, and the interest of the War Department continuously impressed upon recipients.

Regardless of what other persons are recipients at a command, it seems particularly desirable that wherever possible the order of battle chief be included. At Seventh Army this occurred through accident; the personality involved was "in the picture" at a higher headquarters before joining Seventh Army and his status was continued. But this might well become standard practice, other considerations permitting, for the order of battle man is the key to opening up ultra and the preparation of sound strength estimates.

Finally, it is essential that well-grounded intelligence officers be assigned to commands. The proper interpretation of ultra is very often dependent upon a thorough familiarity with information derived from other sources.

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(1) Late on D plus 2, ultra information reached the Seventh Army which indicated that the enemy was withdrawing from south and southwest France. The Commander was faced with a major decision involving two factors:

- a. To what extent could the enemy be pursued and outflanked, considering the difficulty of supplying advance columns over a beach, and
- b. Would the enemy counter attack on the right flank, from the Maritime Alps, and so endanger rear communications.

Ultra provided the answer to the second question, at least a sufficient answer to permit a calculated risk; there was no indication that the enemy would adopt an attitude other than defensive on the flank. Accordingly, it was decided to pursue and all unloading priorities were altered, with the whole emphasis given to fuel and vehicles. Also, Task Force Butler, which had penetrated deep in the enemy rear, was reinforced with the 36th Div. Together they established a road block at Montelimar in the Rhone Valley and cut the enemy escape route. The road block proved insufficient to destroy the 19th Army and they succeeded in fighting their way out, but all heavy equipment was lost in the process.

It is also noteworthy that ultra guided public relations all through these opening days of the campaign, for it was clear from source that the enemy was not aware of the character of the forces operating in his rear. He apparently believed that there were only guerilla forces endangering his lines of communications; and so the existence and operations of Task Force Butler were not disclosed to the press.

(2) Shortly after the German Eifel offensive in mid-December, it became evident that the enemy was preparing an offensive in the Saar-Palatinate, possibly in conjunction with a coordinated attack out of the Colmar bridgehead and a crossing of the Rhine N. of Strassburg. German Air Force reconnaissance orders from ultra pin-pointed the possible crossing area but source was relatively quiet on the Colmar attack; open sources, however, clearly suggested the latter intention. But it was in the sector between Saarbrucken and the Rhine that ultra provided information necessary for a proper estimate of the situation and preparations to meet the attack when it came. During the critical days prior to the attack the Flivo with the German First Army was being read consistently, and enemy order of battle and boundaries were thoroughly known. It was possible, therefore, to state with relative certainty that the main effort in the attack would be made west of the Hardt Mtns., with a secondary attack between the mountains and the Rhine. If there was ever an essential element of information this was it, for the passes through the Vosges Mtns. were a serious obstacle to the rapid movement of Seventh Army reserves. Based on this appreciation, the sector west of the Hardt Mtns. was reinforced with the 2nd French Arm'd Div. and the 36th U.S. Inf.Div., both moving from the Rhine plain. It should be noted that up to the day of the attack, German intelligence failed to pick up these moves.

When the attack was launched on 1 Jan., the German main effort collapsed completely. Their only success was in the sector of the secondary effort, in

and East of the Hardt Mtns. This German offensive was properly appreciated and preparations made to successfully meet the threat. Lacking ultra it seems very doubtful whether the attack would have been repulsed, or whether other sources of information would have given advance warning. Open sources provided only the most meager evidence of an attack, and there was much opposing evidence suggesting precisely the opposite -- a thinning out in the sector and movement of units away from the Saar-Palatinate to reinforce the North.

1. 10 September This command contemplates sending liaison party to 12th Army Group on 11 September. It is believed party will include Chief of Staff, G3, G2 and representative of Air Support Control. All but last named in picture. Prohibition on flights over territory, unless approved by theater commander, called to attention of G2 previously and again to Chief of Staff today in presence of commanding general and G2. Flight route not known. SIU fully informed.
2. 20 November: (1) On morning 20 November, source which could not be employed as basis for further inquiry informed me that information regarding withdrawal of 198 Division in HP 7173 had been passed to 6 Corps by G2 of this headquarters, and that a great flap was started thereby.
- (2) During mid-afternoon, liaison officer from corps referred to rumour of withdrawal of 198 Division.
- (3) During the evening 20 November, in connection with unrelated matter, I learned that G3 of this headquarters was not aware that G2 of corps was no longer a recipient (this misunderstanding now corrected).
- (4) On basis of para 2 and para 3 above I asked G2 of this headquarters if he knew anything about it. Here is the story:
- (A) 6 Corps was jumping off an attack this morning and information regarding 198 Division was vital.
- (B) Accordingly G-2 of Army called G-2 of corps and asked "What about 198 Division?"
- As former recipient, corps G-2 had good idea of meaning behind question. This innocent inquiry was passed down to 36 Division G-2 and then bounded back through a different channel (the order of battle team at each command) all the way to army, each command requesting confirmation of withdrawal, and insisting that information had come from next higher echelon.
- (5) The incident appears to be closed and no repercussions endangering security of ultra are anticipated. The fingers burned in this relatively harmless case should have salutary effect.
- Supposition of withdrawal of 198 Division has now been "opened up" by Army Group. So far as is known, no prior written suggestion to this effect has appeared. It never got beyond rumor stage.
3. 25 November: During evening 23rd, this Hq's, on basis ultra evidence, issued warning to a subordinate corps by telephone that air attacks might be expected. Consider this serious security violation, and, more important, indicative of a failure to appreciate safeguards which must be employed in using ultra.

4. 20 January: (1) At 1430 hours 20 January Nielsen informed me that Newton at XII TAC had received call from VI Corps requested night operations in defence against expected German air attacks in the Hagenau area. Corps stated they had received information from 7th Army.
- (2) Obvious that information was passed to corps on basis BT 2834, showing 5 Jagdivision intention to employ NSG 20 in night ground attacks in VI Corps area. Nielsen briefed his command on stated intention and added that no counter-measures were possible as "cover" was lacking. This was first indication that NSG 20 was operational in our area.
- (3) The G2 and G3 of 7th Army were briefed on BT 2834 at 0900, 20 January.
- (4) At 1500, 20 January G2 7th Army was informed of incident in para 1 above.

Facts are as follows:-

- (a) Upon learning that enemy air intentions for 20-21 January included night attacks on area VI Corps, the G2 7th Army called G2 of VI Corps and passed substantially the following intelligence:
- On 19th January XII TAC flew fighter bomber missions in area of German Rhine bridgehead including the crossing sites. It is probable that the enemy will react by attacking our line of communication in bridgehead area.
- (b) G2 7th Army further stated that information of this type was worse than useless if commands were not alerted to enemy capability when we know it is in fact an intention. To withhold such information would result in our troops getting the hell knocked out of them.

5. 28 April: Following is extract from G2 periodic report number 265, 4th Inf. Div., 2520003 April 45: "Information received from higher H.C. indicates that a determined German effort will be made on night 25th April to destroy the bridge at Dillingen T 0301".
- Quinn informs me that Patch telephoned XV Corps this information based on ultra message relating to "Mredith". Patch briefed on this policy at army group and call was made from there. Presumably XV Corps passed information on to 4th Division.

Only discrepancy above account is that 4th Division is under XXI Corps.