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7 July 1953

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT

SUBJECT: Comments on Mr. Lay's Draft COMSEC Directive

1. As per your request, herewith the position of R/D on the proposed paragraph 2g which covers research and development functions and responsibilities of the Director, NSA, acting for the COMSEC Executive Agent.

a. The Director has taken the position, in which we concur without reservation, that the person assigned responsibility for carrying out the administration of the National COMSEC program must be authorized and empowered to prescribe the crypto-principles used, or proposed for use, in securing classified telecommunications of the Executive Branch of the U. S. Government, and that he must further be authorized and empowered to prescribe rules, regulations and instructions controlling the conditions under which Departments and Agencies of the Executive Branch may and shall use crypto-security equipment. This position appears to us to be the only one compatible with the spirit of the Presidential Directive to "assure within the various Departments and Agencies high and uniform standards of communication security and the adequacy of the cryptographic systems used." We of R&D believe that only with these authorities can "COMSEC policies and procedures be integrated" to achieve the purposes of the Presidential Directive.

b. Prescription of crypto-principle and of crypto-security operating procedures, in order to be effective, efficient or economical, implies both logically and practically that the prescribing authority must have cognizance over the National COMSEC development program. Just as the achievement and maintenance of an adequate state of crypto-security requires a National COMSEC regulatory authority, so continued maintenance of crypto-security in the future requires a National COMSEC research and development program. Denial to the COMSEC authority of the functions of formulating and carrying out the National COMSEC research and development program would result in indefensible loss of effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

c. The person or Agency responsible for the National COMSEC research and development program must be empowered to prevent technically inadvisable, economically unjustifiable, and/or administratively inefficient utilization of the very limited COMSEC development talent available to the United States. This authority must be responsible for the formulation and conduct of an overall COMSEC program, including

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research and development, but he must not be denied the use of various departmental facilities, nor must he be limited to "projects of common concern". To the extent that communications security is of national concern, the crypto-principles and crypto-equipments developed anywhere in the world for the potential use of any organization of the Executive Branch of the U. S. Government are matters of national interest, inasmuch as a weak system used by one Agency is thoroughly capable of nullifying the protection afforded by a sound system employed by all the other Agencies of the Government. Therefore, seen from the technical viewpoint, it is essential to the national security that the U. S. COMSEC Authority supervise a single program rather than merely "review and coordinate" a diversity of COMSEC programs of a development nature.

d. This supervision, in order to be effective in achieving the objectives defined in the Presidential Memorandum, must include authority and responsibility for establishing and conducting the program, for reviewing the program frequently, and for assigning and supervising elements of the program conducted by the various Departments and Agencies. This appears to us to constitute the minimum authority necessary to provide any significant assurance of high and uniform protection for classified Federal telecommunications.

e. The authorizing directive should clearly specify the conditions under which COMSEC research and development projects will be initiated and carried out by the various Departments and Agencies, and it should clearly specify that the COMSEC authority will mobilize all appropriate research and development facilities of the Government in the most effective manner possible. In so doing it should make clear requirements for such logistic support and the manner in which and the extent to which the COMSEC authority may obtain it.

2. In summary, we feel that the substance of paragraph 2g of the draft document prepared by the Department of Defense, 3 March 1953, must be retained, whereas Mr. Lay's revision thoroughly eliminates all its substance. The responsibilities of the COMSEC authority which must be included are:

- a. Prior program approval.
- b. Establishment and conduct of an adequate program.
- c. Assignment and supervision of COMSEC research and development projects.

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4. This in no way stifles or suggests stifling initiative and the exploitation of ideas, but, on the contrary, should encourage the submission of ideas for orderly, expeditious, and effective exploitation in the interest of national security.



WARREN H. TURNER, Jr.
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