

In reply refer to Initials
and No.

NAVY DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

OP-20-GY

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

16 August 1937.

SECRETMEMORANDUM FOR 20A:

1. I have just learned through Mr. Friedman, head of Army Intelligence Section, that the Coast Guard Intelligence Division has been equipped with I.B.M. Tabulating Equipment for Cryptanalytical purposes.

2. The idea of applying this machinery to cryptanalysis originated in the Communication Security Group of the Navy and was revealed in confidence to Friedman. The latter obviously passed it on to his wife who is head of the Coast Guard Cryptanalytical Unit.

3. The application of Tabulating Machinery, and in fact any machinery, to cryptanalysis represents the greatest advance we have made in this field in recent years. It is in my opinion an important weapon of national defense which if revealed to foreign nations might deprive us of a great advantage in time of war.

4. In view of the extensive publicity given to the Coast Guard cryptanalytical activities I believe that immediate steps should be taken to inform responsible authorities of both the Army and Coast Guard that the Navy considers information pertaining to the application of machinery to cryptanalysis is a matter of national defense and should be withheld from disclosure under provisions of the Espionage Act of 15 June 1917. It might also be well to take similar action with respect to the International Business Machine Company through their representative here in Washington.

5. I have taken it upon myself to present the foregoing views to Friedman this morning and request that prompt action be taken to give this action official backing.

Respectfully,



J.N. WENGER.

L.F.W./C
7 Sept.