

CIRCULAR }  
No. 91 }

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C., 29 February 1944.

### SECURITY CLASSIFICATIONS

1. The Combined Chiefs of Staff have approved an agreement made between the American and British services on the definition, classification, and handling of matters to be safeguarded. Procedures, names, definitions, and handling hereinafter set forth are to be put in effect by all War Department offices and United States Army headquarters *on zero zero zero one Z, 15 March 1944.*

2. Instructions to the same effect are being issued for the same effective date to the United States Navy and to the British Armed Forces.

3. It is contemplated that a complete revision of AR 380-5 embodying the details of the new agreement will be printed and distributed to the War Department on or about 1 April 1944.

4. From 15 March 1944 to date of receipt of the revision of AR 380-5, the policy hereinafter outlined will be followed by all concerned. No change in the classification of existing documents is necessitated by this agreement.

5. Combined Security Classifications Agreement.

#### NEED FOR CLASSIFICATION

1. To safeguard official matter, it must be examined and graded into categories so that it may be recognized and accorded proper handling. To grade matter accurately and uniformly, the following general policy and definitions have been agreed upon by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to become effective *15 March 1944.* The detailed instructions based thereon will be issued by the several services concerned not later than *1 April 1944.*

#### DEFINITIONS

2. For the purpose of this agreement, the following definitions apply:

- a. Documents: Any form of recorded information.
- b. Matériel: Any article, substance, or apparatus.
- c. Handling: Care in transmission and custody.
- d. Distribution: Extent of actual or authorized issue of specific matter.
- e. Cryptographic system: Code and/or cipher and instructions therefor.
- f. Registered matter (document): Any classified document or device registered usually by number and periodically accounted for.
- g. Order of Battle: Important dispositions of our forces with the identities of the units and formations composing those forces in or adjacent to operational theaters.
- h. Munitions of war: Any item used for war.

#### CATEGORIES

3. Official matter requiring classification shall be examined and graded under one of the following categories:

TOP SECRET (signal abbreviation, TOP, EC)  
SECRET  
CONFIDENTIAL  
RESTRICTED

4. The United States regards TOP SECRET as a subdivision of SECRET. On the other hand, the British regard TOP SECRET as a distinct category. Although this difference of view is recognized it is immaterial to this agreement under which complete working uniformity is obtained by the adoption of agreed definitions, examples and rules of treatment, for the handling of all classified matter.

5. Providing the following definitions and rules for handling are mutually accepted and rigorously implemented, the difficulties can be overcome.

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**TOP SECRET**

6. Certain secret documents, information, and matériel, the security aspect of which is paramount, and whose unauthorized disclosure would cause exceptionally grave damage to the nation shall be classified TOP SECRET.

7. The following are some examples of matter which normally will be graded TOP SECRET:

- a. Plans or particulars of future major or special operations.
- b. Particulars of important dispositions or impending moves of our forces or convoys in connection with a above.
- c. Very important political documents dealing with such matters as negotiations for alliances and the like.
- d. Information of the methods used or success obtained by our Intelligence Services and Counter-Intelligence Services or which would imperil secret agents.
- e. Critical information of new and important munitions of war, including approved scientific and technical developments.
- f. Important particulars of cryptography and cryptanalysis.

**SECRET**

8. Documents, information, or matériel, the unauthorized disclosure of which would endanger national security, cause serious injury to the interests or prestige of the nation, or any governmental activity thereof, or would be of great advantage to a foreign nation shall be classified SECRET.

9. The following are some examples of matter which normally will be graded SECRET:

- a. Particulars of operations in progress.
- b. Plans or particulars of operations not included under TOP SECRET.
- c. Instructions regarding the employment of important new munitions of war.
- d. Order of Battle information and locations and moves affecting the Order of Battle.
- e. Knowledge of enemy matériel and procedure, the value of which depends upon the enemy not knowing that we possess it.
- f. Vital military information on important defenses.
- g. Certain reports of operations containing information of vital interest to the enemy.
- h. Adverse reports on general morale affecting major operations.
- i. Important improvements to existing munitions of war until accepted for service use.
- j. Photographs of vulnerable points or vital installations under our control.
- k. Certain development projects.
- l. Important cryptographic devices unless assigned to a lower category.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

10. Documents, information, or matériel, the unauthorized disclosure of which, while not endangering the national security, would be prejudicial to the interests or prestige of the nation, any governmental activity, an individual, or would cause administrative embarrassment, or difficulty, or be of advantage to a foreign nation shall be classified CONFIDENTIAL.

11. The following are some examples of matter which normally will be graded CONFIDENTIAL:

- a. Matters, investigations, and documents of a personal and disciplinary nature, the knowledge of which it is desirable to safeguard for administrative reasons.
- b. Routine operational and battle reports which do not contain information of vital interest to the enemy.
- c. Routine intelligence reports.

d. General military radio frequency allocations.

e. Military call signs, unless so collected together that they reveal the Order of Battle.

f. Meteorological information of designated areas.

g. Unit movements of nonoperational significance in areas within or adjacent to operational theaters.

h. Certain technical documents and manuals used for training, maintenance and inspection of important new munitions of war.

i. General tactical lessons learned as a result of operations.

j. Aerial photographs of territories under our control in or adjacent to operational theaters.

**RESTRICTED**

12. Documents, information, or matériel (other than TOP SECRET, SECRET, or CONFIDENTIAL) which should not be published or communicated to anyone except for official purposes shall be classified RESTRICTED.

13. The following are some examples of matter which normally will be graded RESTRICTED:

- a. Information of moves of nonoperational significance in areas remote from theaters of war.
- b. Training and technical documents for official use only or not intended for release to the public.
- c. Certain routine documents relating to supply and procurement.
- d. Aerial photographs of territories under our control remote from operational theaters.
- e. Photographs of enemy, enemy occupied or dominated, areas except those which reveal secret sources.
- f. Strength returns of units remote from operational theaters.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES****GRADING**

14. The designation of persons responsible for grading and regrading will be a function of the appropriate authorities.

15. Each document should be graded according to its own content and not necessarily according to its relationship to another document. This also applies to extracts from graded documents.

16. The grading of a file or group of physically connected documents shall be that of the highest graded document therein.

**REGRADING**

17. IT IS THE OBLIGATION OF ALL AUTHORITIES TO KEEP CLASSIFIED MATTER CONSTANTLY UNDER REVIEW AND TO DOWNGRADE IT AS SOON AS CONDITIONS PERMIT.

**TRANSMISSION BY ELECTRICAL MEANS**

18. Messages which have been transmitted or are to be transmitted in a high-grade cryptographic system of one nation will not be relayed or transmitted by the other nation between point of origin and destination by electrical means in clear language or unapproved "scrambler" system, or low-grade cryptographic system.

**HANDLING (TREATMENT)**

19. No person is entitled solely by virtue of his rank or position to knowledge or possession of classified matter. Such matter is entrusted only to those individuals whose official duties require such knowledge or possession.

**SECRET**

20. SECRET matter will be handled in accordance with the following rules:

- a. The highest grade cryptographic systems available will be used for the transmission of SECRET messages.

b. SECRET documents will be transmitted only by officially designated courier in double sealed envelopes, the inner one being marked SECRET, and will be opened only by the addressee or his authorized representative. Where officially designated courier service is not available, SECRET documents may be transmitted by registered mail service or mail service superior to registered mail service, if the service is completely within national control.

c. Transmission and custody of these documents and matériel will normally be covered by a receipt system and registered documents or matériel periodically accounted for. It is mandatory that registered documents be covered by a receipt system.

d. SECRET messages will not be transmitted by electrical means in the clear, except over approved circuits and providing the rule in paragraph 18 is not violated.

NOTES: (1) An approved circuit is:

A circuit approved by the theater commander The British Services "Defence Teleprinter Network" in the United Kingdom.

(2) This item will not appear in U. S. Regulations on cryptographic security. It will be released immediately to responsible commanders in special letters of instructions.

e. It is the responsibility of the commissioned officer or equivalent civilian holding custody of SECRET documents to insure that all security precautions are taken to guard such documents at all times.

#### TOP SECRET

21. TOP SECRET matter will be handled in accordance with the above rules, with additional safeguards as follows:

a. Under no circumstances will such matter be transmitted by registered mail.

b. Under no circumstances will messages so graded be transmitted by electrical means in the clear.

c. It is mandatory that transmission and custody of such matter be covered by a receipt system.

d. TOP SECRET documents will be handled only by persons specifically designated and may not be disclosed to any person solely by virtue of his rank or office.

#### CONFIDENTIAL

22. CONFIDENTIAL matter will be handled in accordance with the following rules:

a. CONFIDENTIAL documents, except registered, will be transmitted by approved official means. Registered CONFIDENTIAL documents will be handled in the same manner as registered SECRET documents.

b. It is the responsibility of the commissioned officer or equivalent official holding custody of CONFIDENTIAL documents to insure that appropriate security precautions are taken at all times.

#### RESTRICTED

23. RESTRICTED matter will be handled in accordance with the following rules:

a. RESTRICTED documents will be transmitted by such approved channels as will provide a reasonable degree of security.

b. Registered RESTRICTED documents will be transmitted to and from foreign countries in the same manner as registered SECRET documents.

[A. G. 380.01 (29 Feb 44).]

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

OFFICIAL:

J. A. ULIO,  
Major General,  
The Adjutant General.

G. C. MARSHALL,  
Chief of Staff.

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