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~~SECRET~~COPY NO. 6J.C.B. 32/113 March 1944JOINT COMMUNICATIONS BOARDSECURITY OF CIPHERS USED BY NON-MILITARY
AGENCIES OF THE GOVERNMENTNote by the Secretary

1. The attached memorandum for the President from the Under Secretary of State (Enclosure "A") has been referred by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Joint Communications Board as a matter of urgency for study and draft of a reply from the President.

2. Attention is invited to the previous recommendation of the Board to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the President issue an Executive Order requiring all non-military agencies of the Government to submit their cryptographic systems to the Joint Communications Board for examination as to their security. The Board's recommendation was not approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who arranged that a member of their Secretariat (Col. F. W. Wozencraft) acquaint the various agencies concerned with the need for proper use of their cryptographic systems in order to preserve over-all security (See J.C.B. Minutes, 22 Dec. 42, item 2). On 29 Apr 43, the Joint Chiefs of Staff advised the Board of the results of this mission (Enclosure "B").

3. Enclosure "A" was previously circulated under the short title J.C.B. 186. In order to keep all papers on the subject in the same basic numbered paper series, it is requested that the attached paper be substituted for J.C.B. 186, which should then be destroyed by burning.

G. B. MYERS

Secretary

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ENCLOSURE "A"THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
Washington

March 7, 1944

Private

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Security in handling coded messages.

Following our conversations last autumn regarding the Department's code facilities, I immediately began a careful inquiry. Upon looking into the matter, however, I became convinced that it was not a problem affecting only a single agency but rather one in which the Government as a whole was vitally concerned.

There are at present thirty-eight Federal agencies making use of cryptographic systems in one form or another, but there is adequate internal control in only a few of the agencies and there is no over-all coordination. From the point of view of security this is a most dangerous arrangement, for serious blunders seem bound to occur which will place in jeopardy the cryptographic systems of the entire government. The present arrangement affords ideal conditions under which the enemy can break our codes by comparing messages containing similar information but sent in different codes, one of which may already have been broken. It would appear, therefore, that there must be careful coordination among all agencies in the use of cryptographic material.

In addition, it is essential that the codes themselves be sound, that the equipment used be of the most modern types, that the personnel employed be skilled, and that adequate security procedures be followed at every step.

I believe the most effective solution is to assign the War Department, which has had the broadest experience in the field of cryptography, the responsibility for making a thorough survey of existing codes, equipment, and procedures throughout the Government. The War Department will then be in a position to present to you a comprehensive series of recommendations.

/s/ E. R. Stettinius, Jr.

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WASHINGTON

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April 29, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE JOINT COMMUNICATIONS BOARD:

Subject: Measures to insure the security
of codes and ciphers.

On December 1, 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed that a letter should be sent to all non-military agencies of the government which use codes and ciphers, inviting them to submit their codes and ciphers to the Joint Communications Board for examination and advice regarding their security.

I understand that this work has been undertaken with very satisfactory results and that in general the Joint Communications Board is convinced that the codes and ciphers used by non-military agencies are secure.

It is desired that any future activity in this regard be conducted by the Joint Communications Board under the direction of Joint Security Control and that that agency be kept informed of the results obtained from inspections of the codes and ciphers of non-military agencies. It should be remembered, however, that the utilization of the facilities offered by the Joint Communications Board is entirely voluntary on the part of the non-military agencies concerned and every effort should be made to avoid creating the impression that the Joint Chiefs of Staff are attempting to interfere in their activities.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

/s/ JOHN R. DEANE,
Brigadier General, U.S. Army,
Secretary

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