

ROUTING SLIP

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1	NAME OR TITLE [Redacted]	INITIALS		CIRCULATE
	ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION OGA	DATE		COORDINATION
2				FILE
				INFORMATION
3				NECESSARY ACTION
				NOTE AND RETURN
4				SEE ME
				SIGNATURE

REMARKS

In connection with the documents accompanying the attached memo, I suggest you also dig up Enclosure "C" to the "Army views and recommendations on the creation of an Armed Forces Security Agency," which is a part of the "Stone Board Report." If you do not have the latter, please let me know.

Declassified and approved for release by NSA on 10-15-2014 pursuant to E.O. 13526

FROM NAME OR TITLE WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN CONSULTANT	DATE 2 April 52
ORGANIZATION AND LOCATION	TELEPHONE 60493

Serial: 00044

8 OFEB 1952

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MEMORANDUM FOR [REDACTED]

OGA

SUBJECT: Brief History of U. S. COMINT Activities

1. Herewith as requested is a very condensed history of the Communications Intelligence (COMINT) activities of the U. S.
2. It is advisable that I call your attention to the following:
 - a. This history has no standing as an official document, although I believe the information it contains is authentic.
 - b. If the story about the Navy's COMINT organization and activities appears rather meager in comparison with that about the Army's, please bear in mind (1) that there is, so far as I have been able to ascertain, no official Navy history of that organization or of its activities, so that I could consult no official documents or documented sources; and that (2) the activities and results of the Navy's COMINT organization and operations were kept highly secret even within the Navy and were a more or less completely closed book to the Army until about 1937, so that my personal knowledge of or very occasional contacts with them hardly afford a good basis for writing authentic history. The only document I was able to find was an informal and unofficial, very brief history, prepared in draft form by Capt. L. F. Safford, USN, who was Chief of the Navy's COMINT organization from 6 May 1936 until 14 February 1942. Capt. Safford wrote his draft history in November 1943, but carried the story only up to 7 December 1941.
 - c. If I had been given more time, this history might be shorter, or at least it would be more complete, for it would be strange if a few facts pertinent to the history were not omitted as a result of the pressure under which it was written.

3. One such omission now noted is that dealing with the activities of the cryptanalytic unit of the U. S. Coast Guard during the days of the "noble experiment." In 1925 the Coast Guard established a small unit in Washington, headed by Mrs. Friedman and consisting of about half dozen persons, to solve radio traffic of the run-runners operating in U. S. Coastal waters. The Coast Guard built up an excellent intercept service for this purpose. The intercept service and the cryptanalytic unit con-

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Memo. for

- Subj: Brief History of U. S. COMINT Activities

timed to operate even after 1933, working on the traffic of other illicit operations, chiefly those of narcotics smugglers. Shortly after Pearl Harbor the Coast Guard became an integral part of the Navy and its cryptanalytic unit was moved to the Navy Communications Annex (Nebraska Avenue). This unit was kept intact and worked upon clandestine traffic, largely that of German secret agents sent to or from the Western Hemisphere. Soon after V-J Day, this unit did not go back to the Coast Guard but was demobilized. Currently, the Coast Guard conducts no cryptanalytic activities, the Navy having assumed responsibility for such as might be requested by the Coast Guard. I do not believe that any such requests have been made to date.

4. I hope this history, poor as it is, will be useful to you and accept full responsibility for any errors and omissions, all of which are, of course, unintentional.

WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN
Consultant

This document contains information affecting the national defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C., Sections 793 and 794. The transmission or the revelation of its contents in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

See also Public Law 548,
81 Congress second session

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