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~~TOP SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION~~

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
Washington 25, D. C.

1 January 1953

NSA Directive #1

NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY DIRECTIVE NO. 1

1. Section I of this directive contains recently approved governmental policies and directives pertaining to the conduct of communications intelligence (COMINT) activities. The remaining sections contain additional general instructions considered necessary by the Director, NSA, to initiate the implementation of the policies and directives set forth in Section I. These initial instructions will be supplemented by further instructions to be promulgated when and as required. Pending receipt of such instructions, the components of the National COMINT organization will continue to operate in accordance with currently effective policies and instructions insofar as they are consistent with this directive.

2. Copies or excerpts of this directive as appropriate may be furnished to subordinate units at the discretion of the addressees.

AG File Copy

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Major General, US Army
Director

A2-1/9

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SECTION I

MISSIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

PART A - NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

1. Mission - The COMINT mission of the National Security Agency (NSA) shall be to provide an effective, unified organization and control of the communications intelligence activities of the United States conducted against foreign governments, to provide for integrated operational policies and procedures pertaining thereto, to exploit to the maximum the available resources in all participating departments and agencies, and to satisfy the legitimate intelligence requirements of all such departments and agencies for COMINT information.

2. Responsibilities

a. Under the Secretary of Defense, and in accordance with approved policies of the United States Communications Intelligence Board (USCIB), the Director, NSA, is responsible for accomplishing the mission of NSA. For this purpose all COMINT collection and production resources of the United States are placed under his operational and technical control.

b. Specific responsibilities of the Director, NSA, include the following:

(1) Formulating necessary operational plans and policies for the conduct of the U.S. COMINT activities.

(2) Conducting COMINT activities, including research and development, as required to meet the needs of

the departments and agencies which are authorized to receive the products of COMINT.

(3) Determining, and submitting to appropriate authorities, requirements for logistic support for the conduct of COMINT activities, together with specific recommendations as to what each of the responsible departments and agencies of the Government should supply.

(4) Within NSA's field of authorized operations, prescribing requisite security regulations covering operating practices, including the transmission, handling and distribution of COMINT material within and among the COMINT elements under his operational or technical control; and exercising the necessary monitoring and supervisory control, including inspections if necessary, to insure compliance with the regulations.

(5) Subject to the authorities granted the Director of Central Intelligence under NSCID No. 5, conducting all liaison on COMINT matters with foreign governmental communications intelligence agencies.

(6) Making such reports and furnishing such information from time to time to the USCIB, either orally or

in writing, as the Board may request, and bringing to the attention of the Board either in such reports or otherwise any new major policies or programs in advance of their adoption.

c. In fulfilling his assigned responsibilities, the Director, NSA, will be guided by the provisions of the pertinent directive of the National Security Council, and he will:

(1) Transmit the budget estimates and civilian manpower requirements of NSA, as approved by the Secretary of Defense, to appropriate authorities for inclusion in designated appropriations of the military departments or the Office of the Secretary of Defense. These approved estimates and manpower requirements will not be subject to review by the military departments.

(2) Conform to the personnel, fiscal, and property accounting policies of the Secretary of Defense. A departmental property account is authorized for NSA.

(3) Review COMINT requirements, programs and budget estimates of the military departments, insure the provision of an adequate balanced program, and support these items in cooperation with the department concerned.

(4) Establish procedures for production and procurement of specialized COMINT equipments under the cognizance of NSA.

(5) Assure to the maximum practicable extent, in consonance with Department of Defense policies, standardization of specialized COMINT equipments and facilities.

(6) Determine and make known to the Director, Communications-Electronics, the requirements for rapid communications to meet the needs of NSA. These will include a statement of anticipated traffic loads and such additional data as will assist in fulfilling the requirements.

(7) Determine and make known to appropriate authorities courier service requirements as needed for the expeditious handling of COMINT traffic and material.

(8) In consonance with the policies of the Department of Defense, provide means for review, coordination, and approval of all COMINT research and development requirements.

(9) Establish a research and development program adequate to accomplish the COMINT mission, and control the assignment and implementation of all COMINT research and development projects.

(10) In consonance with the policies of the Department of Defense, provide technical guidance and support for COMINT training conducted by the military departments and, to insure necessary levels of technical competence, prescribe minimum standards for their COMINT training curricula.

(11) Conduct necessary specialized and advance COMINT training.

PART B - COMINT AGENCIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

3. Mission - The mission of the COMINT agencies of the military departments shall be to provide the necessary organizations and carry on the necessary operations to accomplish COMINT tasks assigned by the Director, NSA, to perform the functions necessary to support the mission of NSA and to perform approved close COMINT support tasks for military operations.

4. Responsibilities - The COMINT responsibilities of the military departments will include, among others, the following:

a. Providing the necessary COMINT facilities and resources for the support of military operations and of the national COMINT effort in accordance with assigned responsibilities.

b. Procuring, organizing, training, equipping, administering, budgeting, and providing logistic support to their respective COMINT units. This will include provision of adequate reserve programs to meet emergency or wartime requirements.

c. Within the limits prescribed by public law and Department of Defense policies, assigning military personnel to NSA for a minimum period of thirty-six months. Longer assignment of specially qualified personnel is authorized as may be arranged with the department concerned. The military departments may add, withdraw, or substitute personnel within the authorized personnel strength of NSA, subject to approval by the Director, NSA.

d. Advising the Director, NSA, regarding close support matters and recommending the number and composition of COMINT units needed to fulfill the close support requirements of the departments.

e. Performing COMINT collection and production tasks as specified by the Director, NSA.

f. Submitting COMINT research and development requirements directly to the Director, NSA, for his action, and accomplishing such COMINT research and development and service testing as approved or assigned by him. This does not preclude the military departments from initiating and pursuing, subject to prompt notification to and approval by the Director, NSA, such research and development as may be necessary to support their COMINT activities.

g. Fulfilling within their capabilities the military communications requirements of NSA, as allocated by the Director, Communications-Electronics.

SECTION II

COMINT OPERATIONS

PART A - GENERAL OPERATING PRINCIPLES

1. In order to provide an effective, unified organization of the COMINT collection and production activities of the U.S., and to exploit to the maximum the available resources, the following general statements or principles are set forth for the guidance of all departments and agencies concerned.

2. The performance of all COMINT collection and production tasks will be as specified by the Director, NSA. In issuing instructions for the accomplishment of these tasks, he will normally send all instructions other than those of a technical control or routine operational control nature to or through the Chiefs of the COMINT operating agencies of the government department or agency concerned. Regardless of how issued, all instructions affecting COMINT activities will be promptly made available to the appropriate Chief or his designated representative to insure proper compliance therewith. For the latter purpose the Director, NSA, will make available to the responsible Chiefs such information on the operational performance of their COMINT units as may be developed by NSA in order to assist the Chiefs in the discharge of their command responsibilities.

3. Instructions to COMINT activities fall into three categories:

a. Technical control.

b. Routine operational control.

c. Non-routine operational matters.

4. These categories are defined as follows:

a. Technical Control instructions are those pertaining to techniques, methods, and procedures employed in connection with intercept, traffic analysis, cryptanalysis, translation and technical reporting functions of COMINT units. They may include constructive comment and advice on the technical aspects of the performance of those functions.

b. Routine Operational Control instructions are those pertaining to assignment to COMINT units of tasks of an intercept, traffic forwarding, traffic analysis, cryptanalysis, translation, and technical reporting nature, which are within the existing capacity of the COMINT units to accomplish. They involve the routine employment of personnel and facilities reported available and ready for use.

c. Non-routine Operational Matters will include, among other things:

(1) Task assignments and operational instructions requiring administrative or logistical action beyond mere employment of personnel and facilities available and ready for use.

(2) Task assignments, or changes therein, involving a major reorientation of effort.

(3) Close support assignments.

(4) General support mission assignments involving primary responsibility for a complete foreign communications entity.

(5) Reports of errors of commission or omission requiring administrative, logistical, or disciplinary action.

(6) Any commendation on performance or efficiency, or any derogatory comment thereon.

(7) Policy, administrative, logistical, and security matters.

(8) General requirements for operational reports.

5. The procedures outlined below will normally govern the preparation and issuance of instructions.

a. Technical control instructions will be prepared and issued by NSA directly to the field units concerned except when another routing is arranged between NSA and the appropriate COMINT operating agency.

b. Routine operational control instructions to be issued by NSA Headquarters will normally be prepared in consultation with, or be referred to, a representative of the COMINT operating agency concerned who is assigned to NSA Headquarters for that purpose. Should he suggest any changes which cannot be readily reconciled, the

instructions will be released as prepared, subject to later modification if necessary. These instructions will be sent directly to the unit required to take action, or to the field unit responsible for directing the task involved, via such available communication channels as will effect timely delivery.

c. Within the limits of their assigned operational responsibilities and control authority, NSA field units may issue technical control and routine operational control instructions direct to other field units or to the appropriate higher COMINT field units exercising direction over these other field units. When practicable, such instructions will, prior to issuance, be coordinated with the appropriate higher field unit having command responsibility over these non-NSA field units. Non-routine operational matters will be referred to the Director, NSA, for appropriate action.

d. In order to facilitate the exercise of routine operational control, the Chiefs of the COMINT operating agencies will keep the Director, NSA, currently informed, as required by him, of the existing collection and production capacities available for employment in all COMINT operating units of their respective departments and agencies.

e. Non-routine operational matters will be sent to the Chief of the COMINT operating agency concerned through appropriate channels.

f. The COMINT operating agency, and all intermediate COMINT echelons concerned, will be provided, as required by them, with an

information copy of all instructions sent by NSA Headquarters or NSA field units directly to subordinate units of the COMINT agency.

6. Delegation of operational control to a subordinate COMINT unit for close support purposes will, in general, depend upon requirements expressed by appropriate authority and upon certain operational considerations involving the capabilities of the COMINT unit concerned, the practicability of meeting the support requirement with greater economy of resources by other means, and the effect of such delegation upon the conduct of the over-all COMINT effort. To permit the most effective performance of its close support function, the supporting COMINT unit may, through COMINT channels, request COMINT information from appropriate adjacent or higher units within the national COMINT structure.

7. In anticipation of the necessity for delegation of control, as above, and to avoid any unnecessary delay in meeting an emergency situation, provision will be made, by prior arrangement between the Director, NSA, and the COMINT operating agency concerned, for the automatic assumption in clearly defined situations (such as the outbreak of hostilities) of control of specified COMINT facilities and resources, by designated COMINT field units for the close support of specified tactical commanders.

8. Normally, peacetime COMINT efforts of units scheduled to be placed in close support of a tactical commander in wartime will be

assigned such tasks and be so directed, insofar as possible without serious detriment to the over-all COMINT effort, as to fulfill training and other readiness requirements for employment under emergency or wartime conditions. In this connection, operational control of a field COMINT unit in part or in whole may be delegated in peacetime to an appropriate field COMINT unit for the support of a tactical commander for specified tasks and for specified periods of time.

9. The assignment of specific tasks to a COMINT unit shall not be construed to preclude the initiation and performance by that unit of directly related or contributory tasks provided they can be undertaken without interference with the assigned tasks and provided the Director, NSA, or other authority exercising operational control, is promptly notified and concurs in the continuance of the additional tasks.

10. Technical support includes all technical information and guidance provided to facilitate the collection and production of COMINT information. The ultimate responsibility for providing technical support rests with NSA. However, there must be a continuing and prompt interchange of required technical information among all echelons of the national COMINT structure for purposes of mutual support. Arrangements for this interchange will be effected by the units concerned. Technical support and other exchange arrangements involving foreign agencies or activities will be made only with the specific approval of

the Director, NSA. Technical support provided by NSA will be forwarded directly to the units concerned.

11. The application of the general principles stated herein to the control of COMINT collection or intercept activities, and to the performance of COMINT production, or processing and reporting functions, are set forth in Parts B and C of this Section.

PART B - COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

12. The Director, NSA, will exercise final authority in all matters pertaining to the control, for COMINT purposes, of intercept, direction finding, transmitter identification, operator identification, and traffic forwarding as necessary to insure that the total COMINT collection facilities are used to the best over-all advantage. The Director, NSA, will decentralize, as soon as practicable, the conduct of COMINT collection activities to the maximum permissible extent (a) by the delegation of operational control of specified tasks as necessary for purposes of close support, or (b) by the assignment of tasks on an integral or block basis. Where tasks are assigned, or block assignments are made, to field units these units are authorized to exercise such local direction over employment of the collection resources available to them for the purpose as may be required for best results. In such cases, any control which it may be necessary to exercise at a higher echelon will normally be exercised through these directing units.

13. Decentralization of the conduct of COMINT collection activities will normally be based upon the following principles:

a. The delegation of operational control to a COMINT field unit for a specific close support task will include control of such appropriate intercept resources as can be made available directly to the unit for the task.

b. With respect to other collection activities, the Director, NSA, will assign tasks, or make block assignments, to appropriate

intermediate field headquarters, processing units, or individual intercept units, whenever:

(1) The task or assignment can be clearly defined or delineated;

(2) Sufficient capacity is available to the field units to provide, insofar as practicable, the coverage required by all COMINT echelons which must rely upon it; and

(3) The field units undertaking the tasks or assignments are capable of exercising effective direction thereof.

c. When a COMINT field unit is assigned responsibility for a unique processing and reporting task involving a complete foreign communications entity, the associated intercept task will also normally be assigned, and the responsible field unit will exercise necessary direction over the intercept facilities that are allocated for the task.

14. All other intercept control will be exercised directly by the Director, NSA. Intercept assignments made by the Director, NSA, will be based on the following principles:

a. Assignments will be expressed in sufficient detail to insure adequate understanding of the requirements of the Director, NSA.

b. Whenever practicable, coverage of related foreign communications complexes will be concentrated at one station or at stations subordinate to a single field unit to permit best use of intercept, identification and technical support facilities.

c. In making intercept assignments, due regard will be had for the raw material requirements of processing activities associated with, or in the same area as, the intercept units to which the assignments are made.

d. NSA will give consideration to recommendations from any field unit regarding intercept missions performed by that or subordinate units.

15. A degree of intercept flexibility will be provided the field units to meet unpredictable local requirements. This normally will be achieved by the temporary local diversion of positions assigned to search missions. In special instances a small number of positions may be set aside by the Director, NSA, for employment by individual stations or intermediate headquarters on targets of opportunity and to satisfy other unpredictable local requirements.

PART C - PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

16. COMINT processing and reporting will be accomplished at such echelons and in such locations as will provide the most effective and expeditious service to departments, agencies and military commanders authorized to receive COMINT. To this end the NSA main processing center will, in general, perform all processing and reporting which cannot be more effectively or more rapidly performed by other COMINT processing units. Undesirable duplication by either the main processing center or by other units will be avoided. Accordingly, the latter units may be restricted to such processing and reporting as can be accomplished within time limits established by the Director, NSA, with due regard for the operational requirements of the military commanders or other authorities being served.

17. With the approval of the Director, NSA, COMINT processing units may be established by the Services and by other departments or agencies of the Government, as well as by NSA. Subject to the authority of the Director, NSA, and to applicable authority as may be delegated by him, these units will exercise operational control of the tasks assigned to them, and of the COMINT resources made available to them for the performance thereof, as may be necessary for the accomplishment of these tasks. All such COMINT processing units other than the main processing center fall into three general categories, or a combination thereof:

a. Units not in general or close support of any particular field commander.

b. Units in general support of a particular area or functional commander.

c. Units in close support.

18. The following factors will govern processing and reporting operations for intelligence purposes, and will be prescribed by the Director, NSA, in every instance to the appropriate COMINT authorities.

a. The mission (task and purpose) to be accomplished.

b. The authority exercising operational control or direction of assigned tasks.

c. The scope of the operations and the element of timeliness involved.

d. The sources of raw material and COMINT information available to the unit to enable it to carry out its mission.

e. The distribution of the COMINT information produced:

(1) As required for dissemination by the departments and agencies represented on USCIB.

(2) As required for technical purposes.

19. The general application of these factors to the different categories of COMINT units is delineated below.

a. Units not in general or close support of any particular field commander:

(1) Mission: To execute designated tasks.

(2) Operational Control: The Director, NSA.

(3) Scope and Timeliness: Normally the prompt analysis and reporting of the significance of a specified portion of the intercepted communications of a foreign organization.

(4) Sources of Raw Material and COMINT Information: Normally, material intercepted by the unit itself, or obtained from other designated units, and technical data supplied from NSA.

(5) Distribution: To NSA Headquarters, and to higher headquarters of the parent organization if required.

(6) Example: An intercept station intercepting foreign fixed communication services or ICR circuits.

b. Units in general support of a particular area or functional commander:

(1) Mission: To process and exploit specified foreign communications in order to assist in the fulfillment of the COMINT requirements of the commander and his subordinate commanders.

(2) Operational Control: The Director, NSA; exercised directly from Headquarters, or delegated to a Chief of an NSA field activity, or to a COMINT agency for assignment to a specified subordinate field unit thereof.

(3) Scope and Timeliness: Normally, the analysis and timely reporting of the information derived from the intercepted communications of a foreign service of concern to the commander or commanders being accorded general support.

(4) Source of Raw Material and COMINT Information: Normally, material intercepted by the unit itself and its subordinate units or detachments; however, raw material may be made available from other units, usually in the same area, which are intercepting material of value to the particular processing objective. COMINT information will be provided the main processing center, by intermediate headquarters units or by other field units engaged in similar activity.

(5) Distribution: To the commander or commanders being given COMINT support in accordance with instructions of the military departments concerned, to NSA Headquarters, to higher headquarters of the parent organization, and to such other COMINT activities as may be prescribed by the Director, NSA.

(6) Examples: (a) An Air Force field unit processing material from assigned circuits of a foreign air army in coordination with another such unit in the

same area; (b) an Army COMINT headquarters in general support of a theatre ground forces commander.

c. Units in close support of a commander:

(1) Mission: To process and exploit intercepted communications of foreign forces directly opposing or of potentially direct tactical concern to the commander being supported in order to fulfill that commander's close support COMINT requirements.

(2) Operational Control: Normally the commander of the COMINT unit; under circumstances in which a higher echelon COMINT unit has superior information and is equally responsive to the supported commander's requirements, operational control of the unit may be delegated to the commander of the higher echelon COMINT unit.

(3) Scope and Timeliness: Processing will be limited to that which produces information within the time limits required for tactical use by the commander supported.

(4) Sources of Raw Material and COMINT Information: Material intercepted by the unit itself and by facilities made available to it for the purpose, or material obtained from other designated units.

(5) Distribution: To the commander being given COMINT support in accordance with instructions of the military departments concerned, to appropriate adjacent and higher COMINT units, to NSA Headquarters and to such other COMINT activities as prescribed by the Director, NSA.

(6) Examples: (a) An Army field unit in close support of an Army Corps commander; (b) a Navy supplementary detachment afloat.

20. In addition to the missions stated above for field COMINT units to process and report for intelligence purposes, all such units will be required to provide technical COMINT reports, together with specified raw material, to the NSA main processing center, to intermediate COMINT headquarters units and to such other centers and field units as may be designated by the Director, NSA.

SECTION III

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Requirements for research and development of COMINT equipment or techniques will be forwarded to the Director, NSA, for review. After approval, they will be assigned to that research and development facility or to the military department which he determines to be most suitable for the conduct of the work. Requirements will normally be submitted by or through the Chiefs of the COMINT operating agencies. However, in exceptional cases where urgency is of primary importance, requirements may be submitted directly from operational units to the Director, NSA, with an information copy through command channels.

2. The assignment of research and development responsibility for items of equipment needed solely for COMINT operations will be determined in consonance with the aims of maximum over-all efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. As a general rule, the following principles apply:

a. Where the basic requirement applies to more than one agency or department, research and development will be conducted by NSA.

b. Where the basic requirement is generated within NSA for its own use, the research and development will be conducted by NSA.

c. Where the basic requirement applies to only one agency or department, the research and development may be assigned to that

agency or department, provided the work can be conducted with satisfactory efficiency, economy, and effectiveness.

3. Responsibilities for service testing newly developed or modified equipments or techniques will be assigned by the Director, NSA. Normally each agency or department which has operational use for an item or technique will conduct or participate in service tests.

SECTION IV

ADMINISTRATION, TRAINING, AND LOGISTICS

PART A - BUDGET, FINANCE, AND ACCOUNTING

1. NSA will utilize such fiscal and disbursing facilities of such military departments as may be designated by the Secretary of Defense.

2. The Director, NSA, in reviewing the budget estimates and programs of the military departments in support of the COMINT effort, will, in the event of disagreement with the estimates or programs, submit his recommendations to the Secretary of Defense through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman of the Munitions Board, Chairman of the Research and Development Board, or other Department of Defense authority charged with the matters at issue. The Director, NSA, will furnish such advice and assistance in connection with the preparation and review of budget estimates and programs as may be necessary and appropriate.

PART B - PERSONNEL

3. Manning priorities and requirements for NSA will be as expressed by the Director, NSA. Military allocations against these requirements will be resolved with the Services concerned and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

4. The reserve manpower programs of the COMINT agencies of the military departments will include the reserve manpower requirements of NSA. The Director, NSA, will be kept advised of the status of these programs so as to enable him to determine the preparedness status of the national COMINT resources.

5. The Director, NSA, desires to be advised of the assignment of key personnel to COMINT units, as to their qualifications and experience in COMINT matters.

PART C - TRAINING

6. In addition to prescribing minimum training standards for the technical COMINT curricula of the schools operated by the military departments, the Director, NSA, will also prescribe such standards as may be practicable for the training programs of the Reserve components of the Services.

7. The COMINT training activities and materials of the military departments will be reviewed by the Director, NSA, for the purpose of providing necessary technical guidance and support.

8. Participation of personnel assigned to the Service or civilian COMINT operating agencies in the specialized and advanced COMINT training conducted by NSA will be as arranged between the Chiefs of those agencies and the Director, NSA.

PART D - LOGISTICS

9. Definitive requirements for logistic support which the Director, NSA, will require for the execution of his mission, and which the military departments and other governmental agencies may be required to provide, will be developed by NSA and furnished to the departments or agencies concerned prior to the formulation of their budget estimates. It is expected that they will be reviewed by the recipients with respect to their capabilities and returned to NSA. Within the Department of Defense, the logistic requirements to be supplied by the Services will be forwarded to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for evaluation and recommendation; the approved logistic requirements will be placed on the respective Services for implementation. Logistic requirements for other departments or agencies will be returned directly to them for implementation in accordance with the responsibilities assumed by them.

10. The Director, NSA, will review COMINT equipment and material requirements of the Services and governmental agencies and approve priorities and programs in order to insure the effective and economical use of available resources.

PART E - COMMUNICATIONS

11. The Director, NSA, may establish and operate communication centers to serve NSA Headquarters and its subordinate units.

12. Communications between NSA Headquarters and COMINT consumer agencies will be established and operated as may be required and mutually agreed.

13. Communications between U.S. and foreign COMINT activities will be established and operated only as specifically approved by the U.S. Communications Intelligence Board or by the Director, NSA, subject to the provisions of paragraphs 2c(6) and 4g of Section I of this directive.