

~~SECRET~~THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

COPY

22 March 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF, OPERATIONS
DIVISION, WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF:
AIDE TO THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF, U.S. FLEET:

Subject: Security in Handling Coded Messages

Reference: (a) JCS 154th Meeting, Item 4.

Enclosure: JCS 768 (Copy Nos. 55-57).

By reference (a), the Joint Chiefs of Staff arrived
at the following decision which is forwarded for information:

"Agreed to forward to the Secretary of State the
draft executive order contained in the appendix
to Enclosure "A" of JCS 768 with the recommendation
that the State Department propose it for the President's
approval."

/s/ E. D. GRAVES, JR.
E. D. GRAVES, JR.
Captain, U.S. Navy,
Deputy Secretary.

Copy to: Secy, WDGS

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COPY NO. 56

J.C.S. 768

(LIMITED DISTRIBUTION)

15 March 1944Pages 1-5, incl.JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFFSECURITY IN HANDLING CODED MESSAGES

References: a. J.C.S. 138/2
b. J.C.S. 44th Mtg., Item 2

Memorandum from the Joint Communications Board

1. Enclosure "B" was forwarded to the Joint Communications Board as a matter of urgency for study and draft of a reply from the President to the Secretary of State.

2. The Joint Communications Board has considered Enclosure "B" and recommends that Enclosure "A" be approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and submitted to the President.

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ENCLOSURE "A"

COPY

March 1944

PRIVATE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

Subject: Security in Handling Coded Messages

1. Thank you for your memorandum of 7 March with reference to security in handling coded messages in Federal agencies. I am entirely in agreement with your views as to the desirability of having a survey of the situation made, and findings and recommendations submitted.
2. I believe, however, that the survey should be made by the Joint Communications Board, the sole communications supporting agency of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, rather than by the War Department alone. The membership of the Joint Communications Board includes both the Chief Signal Officer of the Army and the Director of Naval Communications. The Board has at its disposal the best cryptographic and communications security experts who are available.
3. Accordingly, I am issuing an executive order, directing that the survey be made. A copy of the draft of the order is attached.
4. Will you please cause to be prepared, and furnished to the Joint Communications Board as soon as practicable, a list of the Federal agencies making use of cryptographic systems.

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Enclosure "A"

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APPENDIX TO ENCLOSURE "A"

EXECUTIVE ORDER

NO. _____

SECURITY IN HANDLING CODED MESSAGES

1. Whereas, it is necessary for the protection of the national security, and for the successful prosecution of the war, that communications from and to the various departments and agencies of the Government of the United States do not disclose, or become a source of, information of value to the enemy; and

2. Whereas, the Joint Communications Board, a supporting agency of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has at its disposal outstanding experts in the cryptographic aspects of communication security;

3. NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, it is ordered that:

a. The Joint Communications Board is hereby directed to make a survey of all cryptographic systems and related procedures now in use, or proposed to be used, by any department or agency of the Government of the United States. The Joint Communications Board will include in the survey an examination of the codes, ciphers, cipher devices and cipher machines and equipment in use for secret or confidential communications, together with all related procedures, including methods of handling, technical employment, and means and equipment for physical security.

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Appendix to Enclosure "A"

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b. All departments and agencies concerned are directed to cooperate fully and to give to the Joint Communications Board, and its designated representatives, any information requested, and access to any records, systems, devices, and equipment involved in this survey.

c. The Joint Communications Board is directed to report to the President, through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, its findings, and to make suitable recommendations for the protection of the national security. Interim findings and recommendations may be made, if desired.

The White House
March , 1944

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ENCLOSURE "B"

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

COPY

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.

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Enclosure "B"

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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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Enclosure "B"

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