FINAL
~~TENTATIVE~~

EO 3.3(h)(2)
PL 86-36/50 USC 3605

SUBJECT NUMBER

OGA

USCIB: 9.2/10    Item 1 Considered at the Twentieth (Special) Meeting of USCIBEC, held on 13 October 1954.

Subject:    COMINT Capability to Provide Early Warning of Chinese Communist Attack on Formosa and the Off-shore Islands Occupied by the Chinese Nationalists.

The CHAIRMAN stated that this meeting is being held at the request of the CIA member who considers the subject problem to be of a pressing nature. He asked [          ] to present the views of his Agency.

[          ] said that he would first like to distribute a paper for use in guidance of the discussion (distributed to all members as an enclosure with USCIB 9.2/5). He then informed the Chairman that this meeting had been called because officials in his Agency feel that the Formosan and off-shore islands area is the area most likely to present us with a hot war on short notice. He pointed out that statements by the Peiping Government cannot be ignored and that they are, in part, borne out by ship concentrations and troop movements. He said that he thought this Committee should decide on specific steps to alleviate this condition and agree upon positive recommendations which can be considered by USCIB at an early date. He then proceeded to read the paper just distributed to all members, which consisted primarily of a series of questions pertinent to the issue.

The CHAIRMAN commented that the questions presented amounted to a large order for the Committee, and stated that there are probably still other questions which could be added to the list to insure a complete study of the problem. He suggested that the Committee proceed to discuss the points raised by [          ] one by one to determine the views of the various members, keeping in mind that we are interested only in COMINT.

The members agreed, then adopted a suggestion by Mr. Patton that Point "K" be considered first. The following comments contain the highlights of the discussion of the points indicated.

Point "K" - Is the Intelligence Community taking full advantage of non-COMINT sources, such as photo-reconnaissance?

COMMANDER WELDEN, explaining the restrictions on recce flights which CINCPAC must observe, stated that efforts have been made to use CHINAT facilities. It was his opinion that while information from both these sources can be expected to improve, photo-reconnaissance still will not serve as a substitute for COMINT in providing early warning of attack.

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TOP SECRET FROTH - U.S. EYES ONLY

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MR. PATTON said that we are attempting to find an overnight solution to a very difficult problem. He suggested that the possibility of obtaining information from non-COMINT sources other than photo recce be discussed.

The CHAIRMAN agreed, stating his belief that Mr. Patton feels that if we can get adequate information from non-COMINT sources, then it is useless to risk efforts on the COMINT side.

[            ] said that he would not be willing to state that information being obtained from non-COMINT sources would provide us with notice of impending attack.

The CHAIRMAN explained that as yet there has been made known no policy decision as to the status of the off-shore islands in the overall picture of U.S. intentions.           OGA

COMMANDER HOLMES stated that there is practically no information on what the Chinese Communists are doing from a naval viewpoint.

MR. BUFFHAM stated that CHICOM knowledge would not cause us to lose much as far as our present success on the problem is concerned.

[            ] said that he would not like to convey the impression that efforts to obtain non-COMINT information are slackening. He expressed his opinion that a greater effort to obtain all possible information from all sources is to be preferred to concentration upon one aspect.

Point "A" - Should we attempt a site survey on the off-shore islands?

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    The question raised by Point "C" (Is there a possibility of establishing intercept facilities on Special Navy Vessels?) was also discussed at some length. Information available to, and presented by, Commander Welden on this subject indicated that this means would require time and expense, and undoubtedly would not be approved at higher Navy levels in absence of more concrete evidence of necessity and assurance of success than now appears to exist.

    The members accepted Commander Welden's offer to look into the matter further with a view to providing additional details on the feasibility of a ship-borne operation in this case.

    Discussion of the remaining points raised by the CIA member left the majority of the members with the feeling that they had insufficient information before them to decide the issues, particularly in view of their inability to determine the practical degree of urgency surrounding consideration of the whole problem.

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    It was accordingly agreed to recommend that the problem be referred back to the Intelligence Committee for additional study of those points not specifically handled by the members of USCIBEC at this meeting. It was agreed, further, that the Intelligence Committee should submit an interim report of as many as possible of its findings in time for consideration at the October 22nd meeting of USCIBEC.

    USCIBEC agreed, further, that the Navy member should review the possibility of employing ship-borne intercept and inform the Committee more specifically of the feasibility of this approach to the problem.

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On the remainder of the questions presented by the CIA member, USCIBEC felt that it had before it insufficient information upon which to base a decision, in light of their inability to determine the practical degree of urgency surrounding the problem.

This item to be continued on the agenda.