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USCIB: 14/112

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8 January 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MEMBERS OF USCIB:

Subject: Security of Foreign Communications.

1. The attached letter on the above subject is forwarded at the direction of the Chairman, USCIB.
2. This subject will be discussed as an item of the agenda for the Fifty-ninth Meeting, 12 January 1951.

*H. D. Jones*  
H. D. JONES  
J. W. PEARSON  
Secretariat, USCIB

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London

12th December, 1950

SB/783

Chairman,  
United States Communication Intelligence Board.

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

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Subject: THE INSECURITY OF [REDACTED]

In accordance with the U.S. - British Communication Intelligence Agreement, L.S.I.B. wishes to raise with U.S.C.I.B. the problem of the insecurity of French cyphers as a matter affecting Third Parties to the Agreement (paragraph 5).

2. This problem was the subject of an exchange of views between the American and British Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs in 1948. At that time Mr. Bevin said that, in view of the gravity of the issues at stake, he thought that the French should be informed with [REDACTED] and this in spite of objections from his expert advisers. Mr. Marshall, however, replied that the National Security Council was unable to accept the British proposals.

3. It is the view of L.S.I.B. that circumstances now exist which require a re-examination of this problem. In the first place, though British cyphers have been, or are in course of being, provided to France and other countries for the transmission of international traffic dealing with Western Union and N.A.T.O. affairs, the security of French telegrams on related or national subjects is still seriously inadequate. Secondly, the trend of international events makes any French cryptographic weakness increasingly inimical to U.S. and British interests. Finally, it is important that the Comint agencies should reach agreement now about the action required so that it may be taken at the first appropriate moment.

4. L.S.I.B. is of the opinion that French cypher security can only be adequately improved by the French undertaking a complete reorganization of their arrangements and accepting outside technical advice. It will be difficult to persuade the French that these radical

[REDACTED]

5. It is proposed that we should first approach the French at the highest level and inform them:

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[REDACTED]

(c) that, should they not believe this, we are prepared to demonstrate it to their experts provided they will agree:

- (i) completely to overhaul their cypher arrangements,
- (ii) to accept the appointment of British and/or U.S. experts to assist them.

Only when all arrangements for the appointment of our experts were completed would we proceed to the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7. L.S.I.B. therefore seeks the concurrence of U.S.C.I.B. to the following proposals:

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- (a) that there should be agreement in principle that an approach to the French on the lines suggested above should be made at an appropriate time;
- (b) that A.F.S.A. and G.C.H.Q. should co-operate in working out the technical details of the action required, both as to [REDACTED] and what cryptographic advice and assistance should be given;
- (c) that to effect this collaboration, A.F.S.A. and G.C.H.Q. should independently work out plans which would be brought together at a conference to be held early in 1951;
- (d) that, once the combined technical plan has been agreed, further consideration should be given to deciding when, how and by whom the plan should be implemented.

8. In order to save time and in the hope of U.S.C.I.B. agreement to these proposals, the technical research required for 7(c) above has already been set in motion at G.C.H.Q.

/s/ [REDACTED]

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Chairman,

London Signal Intelligence Board.

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