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ARMY SERVICE FORCES
SIGNAL SECURITY AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

15-9-1016



SPSIB-3

25 August 1945

SUBJECT: Letter from Mr. Friedman dated 13 August 1945

THRU: Director of Communications Research

TO: Chief, Security Division
Signal Security Agency

This letter from Mr. Friedman deals with the material given to you personally last week.

1 Incl
Letter from Mr.
Friedman

FRANK B. ROWLETT
Lt. Colonel, Signal Corps
Chief, General Cryptanalytic
Branch

SPSIS-3 (25 August 45) 1st Ind.

Signal Security Agency, Washington 25, D. C., 28 August 1945

TO: Chief, Security Division

1. Prior to receipt of basic letter, Mr. Friedman had wired for information regarding the cryptographic systems and classifications of the five messages mentioned in paragraph 3. Captain Leshar was contacted and obtained this information which was sent by B-III in Message No. 15952.

2. It is requested that this office be kept informed of any action taken in regard to the study of this State Department material.

1 Incl
n/c

MARK RHOADS
Assistant Director of
Communications Research

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13 August 1945

Memo for Lt. Col. Rowlett:

1. Under separate cover there has been forwarded a package containing the OKW/Chi decodes forming the subject of my telegram JL 58/8 of 8 August.

2. In connection with your 15952 of 12 August, giving the classifications of five of the messages contained in the package, it appears that either the information supplied by the State Department is incorrect in at least one instance, or the people at OKW/Chi attributed erroneous classifications to the messages, for reasons quite obscure, or, finally, that regulations for the cryptographing of messages are not carefully followed by certain State Department offices.

3. Taking up the five messages, one by one:

a. Nr. 143, from Moscow to Washington. - The German decode starts as follows: "Secret. For the President, Secretary of State, and the Undersecretary of State." According to the information in your 15952, this message was enciphered in "Confidential Strip."

b. Nr. 1691, from Ankara to Washington. - The German decode indicates that the message began with the word "Secret." According to your 15952, the message was enciphered in an unknown restricted system. It may be assumed that the Brown Code was employed, since the message was dated 9 Sept. 1944 and the German decode was solved the same day and was issued on 13 Sept. 1944. It is, of course, clear that the use of the Brown Code was warranted, since practically the whole message is merely a translation of a Note handed our Ambassador by the Rumanian Foreign Office. But then the question arises: "Why begin the message with the word "Secret"?"

c. Nr. 173 from Washington to Moscow. - This is a two-part message, containing the texts of two messages from Chungking and Ankara being repeated for the information of the Ambassador at Moscow. The second telegram begins: "Strictly Confidential". According to your 15952 the message was enciphered in a strip cipher, no classification indicated on the Washington message.

d. Nr. 810, from Stockholm to Washington. - This message begins: "Ausserst Geheim", which is equivalent to "Most Secret" or "Top Secret". Your 15952 states that the message was sent as an unclassified, plain language telegram. This can hardly be correct, the message is dated 23 June 1943, was solved by 9 October 1944 and issued on 24 October 1944 - sixteen months later.

e. Nr. 1617, from Ankara to Washington. - The German decode indicates no classification and it was issued only two days after it was received in OKW/Chi. The chances are that the message was sent in plain language, as indicated in your 15952, and was probably properly treated.

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3. Within the package sent you there are many messages which were solved with a year or more's delay. They were probably in strip cipher but they bear no indication of classification (in accordance with good practice). Undoubtedly many of them were secret and confidential, but they were all of an early date in 1943, when the uninterrupted version of the strip cipher was in effect. However, in the same package you will find at least one case wherein a message bearing the internal classification "Top Secret" was read by the Germans within a couple of days; This one, which I found in a rather quick survey, was from Ankara to Moscow (Nr. 1 of 18 October 1944). It is largely a quote from a Note and maybe it was correct to send the message in Brown Code. But why mark it "Top Secret"? If it was not in Brown Code then I am at a loss to account for this one and there would seem to be certainly something "very rotten in the State of Denmark". If, as I assume, the modified strip cipher was in use everywhere after 1 January 1944, and the statement of German cryptanalysts, to the effect that they could not handle the modified version of that cipher, are true then what shall we make of a case like this if the message was not in Brown but in strip? Or are these chaps lying? I am anxious to know as soon as possible what information SSA can dig up on the contents of the package.

4. So far only one box of material has been obtained, but an extensive diving operation in Lake Schliersee is being undertaken, as soon as possible and it is anticipated that additional boxes may be found. Whether these will contain many solved messages of 1944 and early 1945, long after the strip system was modified, therefore remains to be seen.

5. At the moment it appears that the statement of an officer at USFET, to the effect that a "Nay Machine" had been used for enciphering some of these messages, may be erroneous--but I don't know for sure.

6. I presume you are keeping Security Division informed and in the picture on this very interesting situation. I hope you get the same "kick" I did in handling the original German VN's and seeing how they did it.

7. Many thanks for information regarding my family. Letters came the next day. I'm having an interesting and profitable visit. Greetings to all.

/s/ William F. Friedman
WILLIAM F. FRIEDMAN

(in handwriting)

P.S. Attached clipping makes reference to a recently released W.D. report on the atomic bomb. Dr. McVittie has asked me to try to get up to six copies, if possible. Would you please ask Lt. Hornberger to try to obtain them? If available, send to Major Seaman, marked for attention of Dr. McVittie. Many thanks.

I'd like to have a copy kept for me by Mark Rhoads.

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