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NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Serial: 2445  
14 April 55

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, USCIB

SUBJECT: Compromise of COMINT Information

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

Reference: NSA Message 102000Z February 1955

1. On 9 February and on 20 February 1955, similar violations occurred at the NSA Communications Center. In each instance a portion of a message, designated as NOFORN material, [redacted]

2. The reference was an initial report of the 9 February violation. This error occurred as a result of the teletype tape of the NOFORN message becoming attached to the page copy of a message from [redacted]

~~SPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED~~  
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of the evening watch. The oncoming operator was informed by the departing operator that the subject message was the next to be transmitted. Assuming that the tape and page copy of the message had already been properly checked by the operator he had just relieved, the evening watch operator proceeded to transmit the NOFORN message to



from the National Security Agency, that the procedure there is for the operator to destroy immediately messages "busted" by a transmitting station, unauthorized distribution of the NOFORN information must be assumed. In the first occurrence, materials indicating U.S. ability to extract information from certain sources have been sent to a collaborating COMINT center. In the second occurrence, the text was releaseable but the transmission revealed the designation of a source of intelligence which is classified U.S. Eyes Only.

5. A proper check at the transmission point should have revealed these errors and prevented both of these violations. Although Standing Operating Procedure prescribes a check of all tapes prior to transmission, personnel shortages and the current traffic load have interfered with full compliance with this. Moreover, it is not unusual for one operator to be responsible for two full-duplex circuits, as was the case in both these instances. Accordingly, the following corrective actions were taken to reduce the possibility of recurrence:

a. Operators on terminals of circuits to non-U.S. activities have been instructed to check each tape against the page copy prior to transmission to insure that they agree and to scan a sufficient portion of the heading of the message on the monitor printer to insure that the proper tape is being transmitted.

b. Terminals of circuits to non-U.S. activities have been isolated, and each terminal is manned by a single operator.

It is considered that the above actions constitute presently satisfactory corrective measures in view of current personnel limitations.

6. Statements were taken from the individuals concerned, and they substantiate the facts as reported above.

7. The training program at the NSA Communications Center is comprehensive and well planned. Personnel shortages, however, have interfered with full implementation of it as planned, and the majority of the

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training is "on-the-job". Insufficient training of the operators, nevertheless, cannot be adduced in these cases, since they were not only well trained but also experienced. They have been cautioned and all operators have received additional instruction.

FOR THE DIRECTOR:



J. S. HOLTWICK, Jr.  
Captain, US Navy  
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