

24 December 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Cabell

SUBJECT : The U.S. COMSEC Board

1. The basic charter for COMSEC -- NSC 5711 of April 25, 1957 -- was approved a year prior to revision of our NSCIDs. The document parallels closely the old NSCID 9, to which it was closely related. For example, it preserves the same Special Committee of the NSC, although the footnote provision for occasional additional participations in Special Committee sessions includes not only the Attorney General, where FBI interests are involved, but also the heads of any other departments and agencies concerned. On the COMSEC Board, itself, the Joint Staff is not represented, although the AEC and Treasury are. Much of the specific language is parallel to, or even identical with, corresponding provisions in NSCID 9. A reference exempting CIA communications (paragraph 3.b.) refers specifically to paragraphs 1 and 2 of old NSCID 5, which have now been superseded by entirely different language in different paragraphs of new NSCID 5. The COMSEC charter will therefore eventually require appropriate revisions.

2. Communications security is defined (paragraph 4.c.) as the protection resulting from measures "designed to deny to unauthorized persons information . . . derived from . . . telecommunications, or to mislead unauthorized persons . . . ." The close relationship to COMINT is obvious and is further emphasized by the designation of DOD as executive agent, and of NSA to act for the DOD in nearly all duties.

3. A case might well be made for including COMSEC under the overall cognizance of the Intelligence Board. However, as General McClelland pointed out, the functions of the COMSEC Board require the competence of trained communications personnel -- and its present relationship to the intelligence community appears to be close and satisfactory. I therefore recommend no change at this time; but consideration might be given to combining this directive with NSCID 6 in a future revision.

[Redacted Signature Box]

L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR.  
General, USA (Ret.)  
Deputy Director (Coordination)

Attachment NSC 5711

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Gen T teleph Gen F  
who concurred in view in  
par 3.

List

See note hereon.