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Transmittal & File on CSS-COINS Upgrade

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INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION HANDLING COMMITTEE
of the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

IHC-M-51
18 December 1972

Minutes of the Fifty-First Meeting, 15 November 1972

Members or Representatives Present

Chairman	- [redacted] DCI/IC (M)	25X1
CIA	- Mr. Charles A. Briggs (M)	
State	- Mr. William P. Deary (M)	
DIA	- [redacted] (M)	25X1
NSA	- [redacted] (R)	
AEC	- Mr. Kirby A. Gean (M)	
Army	- Col. Patrick A. Ulmen (M)	
Navy	- Capt. Leonard E. Tillerson (M)	
Air Force	- Mr. William F. Schulze (A)	
Secretary	- [redacted] IHC/SS	25X1

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Others Present

NBS	- Dr. Ruth M. Davis	
CIA	- [redacted]	25X1
DIA	- [redacted] (A)	
Navy	- Mr. Edward L. Barker (A)	
IHC/SS	- [redacted]	25X1

(M) - Member (A) - Alternate (R) - Representative

Address by Dr. Ruth Davis, National Bureau of Standards, on Computer Security

1. The Chairman introduced Dr. Ruth Davis of the National Bureau of Standards (NBS) to discuss with the IHC the problems of computer security as viewed at the national level. Dr. Davis reviewed the role of the NBS in computer security and explained that under legislation the Bureau had responsibilities in this area. The Institute for Computer Sciences and Technology was placing most emphasis in this regard on the civilian agencies

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of the government, particularly those in the public service areas rather than those agencies with long established internal competence in computer security such as NASA, DoD, and AEC. The NBS had been asked to focus on overcoming the major impediment to the continuing use of computers in public service areas, that is, controlled accessibility or computer security. The NBS had also tried to eliminate the semantic smog which surrounded the phraseologies, privacy, security and control of accessibility and with some success have insisted that privacy is a matter for the courts, not the NBS. Nor is the role of security the responsibility of the NBS. Security is an administrative matter, generally, and can be handled by agencies' administrative directives. This left "controlled accessibility to computer systems," as the technological third part of the computer security problem, an area in which guidelines were much needed. Standards and requirements for equipment controls and accessibility are also very much needed. There is need throughout the government for direction from OMB to all the agencies regarding an adequate technological basis on which each agency using computers could resolve its own problems of controlling accessibility. It was pointed out that this is an area where GSA can introduce procurement requirements.

2. For the NBS this means their involvement in complex technical aspects of the security problem and will necessitate their working with groups with established competences.

3. OMB shares the NBS' belief that a major impediment to good computer utilization is the lack of mechanisms for making people feel comfortable about accessibility. In August of this year OMB wrote a letter to the NBS (Secretary's Note: Copies of which were distributed to members present). The OMB is asking the NBS to take the lead in talking with IBM (which is spending $40M on this problem) and other companies in exploring how the government can interact with them on this problem. This is a difficult area, because one can neither work with just one company nor have them all come together to pool their R&D in an industry wide approach (because of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law). The Commerce Department is attempting to properly coalesce the efforts of industry to meet stated needs (in this case public services). The NBS has found that the efforts of industry are quite disparate--and NBS does not have the mechanism for focusing on guidelines, on equipment, or means of certification. Nor does the NBS necessarily want this role.

4. The NBS would like to work with all agencies, especially the intelligence community, and presumably through this committee, in further meetings to formulate the best way of

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dealing with the problem of controlled accessibility. Their present intent with OMB concurrence is to investigate a two phased conference effort. In the first conference the government agencies would pull together statements of their needs. The follow-on would be a conference in which industry presented their approaches to a solution. Dr. Davis believes that there are difficulties in setting up both conferences. She has yet to see government agencies adequately accumulate an expression of needs, and does not believe there could be a uniform industry approach to the problem. Instead a large number of individual approaches by different companies to the government agencies would probably result. She would appreciate IHC advice on this problem.

5. The OST has a different interest. There is strong personal interest based upon Dr. David's background with the Bell Telephone Laboratories, and a strong professional interest because there is a large amount of R&D on-going in the government directed toward a somewhat unfocused set of needs. The OST focal point in computer matters is Mike Noll. He has worked with NSA in the intelligence world and the NBS in the civilian world and has encouraged them to work together on this problem. The NBS would have to evaluate equipment and develop standards so that Company "X" won't come out with a "secure" terminal which NSA and the intelligence community knows to be not secure. NBS would try to develop ways of ensuring that industry meets some performance standards or security standards. The NBS needs the technical competence resident at NSA to perform these tasks.

6. The Chairman asked the question, if the intelligence community solved its problem through its R&D effort would their solution then be a standard and be acceptable to the rest of the government and industry? Dr. Davis thought it would be an input to a standards program rather than a standard itself. In many instances the intelligence community's problems could be solved by an administrative memorandum, much more easily than could those of civilian agencies. In some instances in state and local governments, courts and law enforcement agencies won't share data bases because of lack of control over them; and a technical resolution of these problems is urgently needed. However, Dr. Davis believes that the intelligence community's efforts are essential and hopefully will resolve some of the NBS' problems.

7. Mr. Deary remarked that apparently the governments' community's "multi-level problem" was really the same as the civilian community's; i.e., to be sure that the person using the terminal is entitled to the information he is asking for. Dr. Davis stated that the problem was identical.

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8. [redacted] mentioned a workshop on this problem, sponsored by the NBS, composed of federal and industry people to be held in December (after the Fall Joint Computer Conference). Dr. Davis mentioned that [redacted] (former Chairman of the IHC R&D Subcommittee) will chair the workshop. 25X1 25X1

9. [redacted] remarked that there was little economic motivation for industry to solve this problem and questioned whether it was possible that some legislation be enacted to solve this problem. Dr. Davis thought that his concern was basically true, though the proposed Congressional mechanism might not be correct. The economics of secure systems would mean there would be differences in their costs; perhaps government subsidies would be needed initially. Legislation could be dangerous and perhaps not needed. Dr. Davis stated that increased access controls are going to cost more money but that this could be solved with procedures specific to each field (e.g., banking) rather than a single regulatory law. 25X1

10. [redacted] asked how far away we were from a reasonable solution to the multi-level problem. Dr. Davis thought that it would be about two to 2 1/2 years until the first step is completed; i.e., providing guidelines which will handle a majority of the computer security problems in the public sector. For adequate technological results that would be used for the next generation system architecture and addressing computer utilization in such a way that it is not necessary to come up with a patchwork solution which would thereby decrease cost effectiveness, she thought the answer was about four years away. This meant assimilating the results of all agencies' R&D whether it was in the intelligence community or not and developing mechanisms to apply it properly. 25X1

11. Mr. Gean, after mentioning the computer security situation within the AEC, asked how they could offer their expertise to help solve the problem. [redacted] called attention to the Congressional statute governing the handling of AEC data (which had excluded it from DCID 1/16) and asked if something could not be done to bring this statute up to date to include automatic data processing requirements. Mr. Gean thought this might be an appropriate time to look into the revision of this law. 25X1

12. Col. Ulmen pointed out the Services' problem, that there are new interactive, on-line systems now being installed, with no approved solutions for this multi-level problem.

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It is an immediate problem for people in the field. The Services believe there are enough tools present today in combinations (i.e., physical security, personnel security, and overall system environmental management) to provide guidance which would allow them to operate multi-level today, while waiting for the more reliable hardware and software solutions that will come in perhaps five years. He stated that the Service could not wait five years for a nice clean solution, but must operate today.

13. Dr. Davis believed that there would be useful results from the NBS planned conferences; perhaps some guidance this fiscal year. But she will not release that guidance unless she believes that it reflects all that we already know and that they had the benefit of some of the research in this area being conducted by CIA and NSA. The Chairman stated that Dr. Davis was obviously not attempting to solve the Services' problem, because they must get authority within the context of the environment in which they live.

14. Col. Ulmen expressed concern that recognition of the larger scale problem would freeze action on solutions to some of the immediate problems. Mr. Briggs pointed out that we have been addressing interim solutions to these problems with high urgency for years. Mr. Deary observed that the "worst case" argument had prevailed in the computer security field but now there was a countervailing force being introduced by arguments such as Col. Ulmen's, which ultimately will push the "worst case" argument down the drain. Ironically, Congress will not be as sympathetic to ad hoc solutions and will insist on foolproof technical protection for privacy in the civilian world, while intelligence data will be forced into a compromise between the need to use and the need to protect it.

15. Mr. Briggs hoped that this committee or the Computer Security Subcommittee could be a direct channel to the NBS on this matter. He also mentioned that the USCSB is interested in this area.

16. [redacted] reported that NSA is working with Dr. Davis in this area. There are some legal difficulties to be overcome as yet because of the limitations of NSA authority in this area and there is a question of budgetary resources but NSA is anxious to participate in this effort. 25X1

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17. Dr. Davis hoped that the IHC could provide a point of contact from which the NBS could start pulling together some of the excellent results of the intelligence community's research to apply to civilian agency problems. The Chairman said that the IHC and CSS/SECOM together would be the points of contact, and that this would not be difficult because the staffs work very closely together, and that they will keep her informed. (Dr. Davis departed at this point.)

Upgrading of COINS to T-KH

18. [redacted] reported that the CSS had had three meetings since the Chairman's letter (dated 3 October 1972) to Chairman/SECOM on this problem. The Subcommittee had not finalized any long-term conclusions but for the short-term they were quite pessimistic about this matter, primarily because of the practical problems involved. Even if they said "go" today, it would take a year to accomplish the personnel and physical security tasks involved. He hoped to have an interim response back to the IHC by December. 25X1

19. The Chairman believes that part of the difficulty lay in a definition of what COINS is, complicating the question with both IDHS and NSA internal and overseas problems. [redacted] believes the variables--how big a population and area, plus what kind of TK material--were basic questions also. The Chairman hoped that consideration of this problem--perhaps aided by [redacted] examination of COINS--would continue at a rapid pace. 25X1 25X1

20. [redacted] asked if SECOM was examining the question of why there should be different physical and personnel security requirements for SI and TK. [redacted] replied that there had been uniform personnel clearance standards since DCID 1/14 (effective date 1 July 1968) and that there is an Ad Hoc Working Group of SECOM developing uniform physical security standards for all sensitive compartmented information. 25X1 25X1

21. [redacted] stated that the IHC could not accept a completely negative reply from CSS. The statement must not say you can not use TK on COINS, but must show how it can be done. The pressure is such that people are just going to do it anyway. Col. Ulmen agreed that there must be ways to do it; perhaps using physical security to control access, rather than trying to clear everyone. The members discussed various interpretations of DCID 1/16. 25X1

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ASD/I Review of COINS

22. [redacted] has had his Terms of Reference refined, narrowing them to the COINS information exchange in the Washington area. At the last meeting three of the new tasks were slightly modified and tagged to specific dates for the four phases of the study. The report is to be presented to [redacted] by 1 February 1973. The Chairman is satisfied that the new terms of reference are adequate for the job. 25X1 25X1 25X1

Armed Services' Grades

23. Discussion on this subject was deferred until the December meeting at the request of CIA. This standard is to be published as a DoD standard on 20 November. Therefore it appears that it will be published as a USIB standard some time subsequent to its appearance as a DoD standard. (Secretary's Note: The DIA - Armed Services' Grades Data Elements and Related Features was issued on 20 November 1972.)

Minutes

24. The last two sets of minutes were circulated in draft almost-verbatim because at these meetings a small group spoke very frankly about some new ideas. An abbreviated set of minutes, however, were issued for the record. The Chairman found these long minutes very useful, but does not intend to continue to issue them because of the work involved.

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Next Meeting

28. The next meeting will be held at CIA on Wednesday, 13 December 1972 in Room 7D64.

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Executive Secretary

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