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II, VIII

2 March 68

PUEBLO

Although the PUEBLO mission was primarily oriented toward SIGINT collection, control of the operation, both operationally and with respect to the Naval Security Group detachment aboard which collected the SIGINT, was vested in the Navy. Basically, operational control of all U. S. COMINT activities and of the ELINT activities of the Service Cryptologic Agencies (SCAs) is a responsibility of the Director, NSA, by virtue of NSCID-6 and the derivative DoD Directives (3115.2 and 3115.4). These same directives, however, do make provision for the Director, NSA, to delegate operational control of certain SIGINT activities when required for the direct support of military commanders in the field. With regard to the Navy, the Director, NSA, in 1959, delegated operational control of SIGINT direct support activities, i. e., Naval Security Group detachments afloat, to the Chief of Naval Operations with management effected for the CNO by the Director, Naval Security Group (now Commander, Naval Security Group Command). Further delegation by CNO to the fleet commander is then accomplished. Operational control of shipboard SIGINT activities can be exercised in a number of ways depending upon the situation. In the case of trawler operations, an agreement was arrived at between the Navy and NSA in November 1965 wherein modes of operation for the trawlers were established. These modes (5 in all) specify who has control of the SIGINT activities on a particular mission, i. e., NSA or Navy control. The PUEBLO

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mission was a Navy controlled (direct support) operation. In other words, the fleet commander (CINCPACFLT) was responsible for the assignment of tasks, designation of specific targets and allocation of effort - what to do - based upon fleet requirements for intelligence. The secondary SIGINT mission of the PUEBLO was to be responsive to NSA pursuant to National SIGINT objectives and requirements on a time-available basis. NSA provided tasking for this secondary mission at the request of the Navy. Although the SIGINT operational control was delegated to the Navy, the manner in which the collection of SIGINT is accomplished is not delegated. The Director, NSA, continues to exercise technical control of the SIGINT activities and provides SIGINT support to all SIGINT operations even when operational control has been delegated. Consequently, NSA tells all SIGINT collectors and processors how to do the job - prescribing uniform techniques and standards which, as you can imagine, are essential. I should note at this point that with respect to the Technical Research Ships (TRS) -- the LIBERTY was one of them -- NSA tells the Research Department both what to do and how to do the collection job, since these ships, unlike the trawlers, are considered a national rather than direct support resource.

At the time tasking was provided to the Navy, I alerted my fixed SIGINT sites to the mission and ordered them to report reflections of any North Korean reaction via our normal SIGINT reporting vehicles (CRITICOMM). I also provided to the Joint Chiefs of Staff/Joint Reconnaissance Center a recapitulation of actions

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taken by the North Koreans in reaction to U. S. reconnaissance efforts as seen in SIGINT. The tasking assigned the PUEBLO as a secondary priority consisted of general targets of opportunity and in the nature of intelligence development cannot be classified as urgent or a requirement. This is not to say, however, that successful collection would not be of interest to U. S. intelligence consumers. The targets which the PUEBLO would have covered would not as a general rule be assigned to, or capable of being intercepted from, [REDACTED]

As to the actual incident, I am sure you are already familiar with most of the details of the seizure. I can describe briefly the incident as reflected in SIGINT if you desire or wait until we have more time together. There were many reflections in SIGINT of the PUEBLO encounter with the North Koreans; these reflections are the basis for the belief of the Government that the ship was in international waters at the time of the incident. I should point out that no real-time reporting of the incident took place as it occurred, since no intercept was available until shortly after the capture. Events took place very quickly; the radar tracking information and other intercept was collected by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and was made available to the community as soon as it was transmitted. Since most of the earlier indications of radar tracking

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[REDACTED]

The damage to the cryptologic effort is very serious. It appears now that it may be greater than my earlier statement to you in my letter of 13 February. The reason for this belief is that our initial damage assessment did not consider to any great degree all the information contained in the minds of the Communications Technicians, i.e., we did not believe that classified information would be disclosed as freely as it was to the North Koreans. The ineffective destruction of the large amount of classified material aboard the ship was another factor. I will be in a better position to describe in more graphic terms the damage to the cryptologic business upon completion of the assessment which my people, with assistance from the Naval Security Group, are presently writing. It should be finished within three or four weeks.

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