

# CRYPTOME

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The Director of Central Intelligence

**Memorandum for the President, April 23, 1971**

**Guidance in the field for the protection of classified intelligence information including that bearing on intelligence sources and methods.**

Richard Helms

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NSC 27946 <sup>D</sup>

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

23 April 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

In response to your memorandum of December 21, 1970, I wish to report what I have done with respect to providing guidance in the field of protection of classified intelligence information including that bearing on intelligence sources and methods.

I have issued through the United States Intelligence Board detailed guidance governing disclosures in this area. A copy of these guidelines is attached. They have been concurred in by the addressees of your December 21st memorandum. Each of them has instituted a thorough review of existing regulations and procedures within his department or agency to make sure that they meet the criteria required for protecting classified intelligence.

The attached guidance for the intelligence community asks that the chiefs of all components of the community do the following:

- Review existing departmental and agency regulations, including briefing and indoctrination procedures;
- Provide for periodic reindoctrination and continuing education in security practices and procedures;
- Review procedures for authorizing and controlling disclosures and releases. (This section specifies that the responsibility of the intelligence chief for assessing risks to intelligence sources and methods should be delineated and that a review should be provided for when danger to such sources and methods may exist. It goes on to provide for sanitizing in appropriate cases and for procedures to report inadvertent or deliberate disclosures, including assessment of damage and remedial action.)

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-- Take firm disciplinary action where appropriate, and refer to the Department of Justice in cases where violation of criminal statutes may be involved.

I shall ask the intelligence chiefs to make a particular effort to assure that in the event of a proposed, or an unauthorized, release of sensitive and specially-compartmented intelligence, the appropriate member of the community be consulted as to potential damage to sources (e.g., the Director of the National Security Agency in the case of communications intelligence). I shall also ask the intelligence chiefs to report back to me periodically on actions taken to implement the guidance, so that I can monitor these developments on your behalf.

I believe that these actions are responsive to your charge to me. I have stressed my particular area of responsibility, i.e., the protection of intelligence sources and methods. The broader field of reviewing the handling of classified information in general is being looked at by a committee responsive to NSSM 113. The Central Intelligence Agency is represented on this committee.



Richard Helms

Attachment

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Attachment  
USIB-D-9.2/39  
23 April 1971  
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Guidance Governing Disclosures of Classified Intelligence

As pointed out in the President's directive of December 21, 1970, subject "Disclosures of Classified Information and Coordination and Clearance of Official Statements," machinery now exists to protect all classified information. It is recognized that unauthorized disclosures of classified intelligence may involve thoughtlessness in the application of regulations and procedures already in effect. Further, with respect to sources and methods, widespread discussion of this subject, some of it unavoidable but much of it gratuitous, seems to have conveyed an impression in some parts of the Government that there is little, if anything, that is not known to the public. The protection of intelligence sources and methods continues to be of vital importance to our intelligence effort. The true origin of many categories of intelligence information to be used in public release or debate must be disguised and the use of all such information must be duly authorized. The responsibility for authorizing release and for devising proper disguise rests with the originating agency.

The President's directive of December 21, 1970, refers to the statutory responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence for the protection of intelligence sources and methods. The National Security Act of 1947 specifically states:

"... And provided further, that the Director of Central Intelligence shall be responsible for protecting intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure;"

It is not to be expected that all consumers of intelligence, policy makers and others would recognize or be fully alert to potential danger to intelligence sources and methods resulting from release of intelligence. Consequently, it is believed that the intelligence community should take the leading role within their departments and agencies.

Chiefs of all components of the intelligence community should review the existing regulations and impress on all concerned the necessity to abide by them. The following specific actions should be taken:

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GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

1. Review existing departmental and agency regulations governing the control of classified information to make sure that in every instance they meet the criteria required by the steadily increasing volume and significance of classified intelligence, particularly including sensitive compartmented intelligence. Particular emphasis should be placed on assuring that the need-to-know principle is strictly enforced.
2. Make sure that briefing and indoctrination procedures are reviewed with the objectives of paragraph 1 above in view. These procedures should be so designed as to assure that newly indoctrinated members of the intelligence community and other newly indoctrinated officials of the Government fully understand the differences which exist among various kinds of intelligence, with respect to danger to the source or method which would result from disclosure. It should also be the purpose of these procedures to explain the way in which cleared individuals can readily ascertain the clearance status of others before discussing classified information revealing intelligence sources and methods, and to make sure that they do so.
3. Provide for periodic reindoctrination and continuing education in special security practices and procedures relating to intelligence, in addition to those security procedures established as general policy, to include a program for prompt debriefing of individuals who no longer have a need-to-know.
4. Review procedures for authorizing and controlling disclosures and releases.
  - a. The responsibility of the intelligence chief for assessing the risk to intelligence sources and methods involved in deliberate disclosures should be delineated. There should be a review and assessment by intelligence authorities whenever any classified intelligence is proposed for declassification or for use in briefings, testimony, symposiums, seminars, speeches, writings for publication, presentations, courses of instruction, press releases, formal and informal interviews with press representatives, or other activities in the course of which there is a danger that intelligence sources and methods might be revealed.

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Each assessment should include methods by which such intelligence can be effectively and plausibly sanitized by or with the approval of the originating agency so as to protect the source. Sensitive intelligence to be disclosed should be clearly identified as such and the official disclosing it should be so cautioned when appropriate. This can be particularly important in dealing with some public information officials who cannot be expected to be fully familiar with the origins of such sensitive intelligence. Records should be maintained regarding any classified intelligence declassified or authorized for disclosure.

b. The facts surrounding inadvertent disclosure of classified intelligence to any person or persons not authorized for access to such intelligence should be reported to the appropriate intelligence chief, who will inform the originating agency in any potentially harmful case.

c. Any person having knowledge of any disclosure of classified intelligence made contrary to the regulations and controls of the department or agency concerned should promptly report it to the appropriate intelligence chief for action. Such action may include (1) such steps as are feasible to repair or limit the extent of the damage; (2) a request for investigation by appropriate authorities; (3) an assessment of the possible harm to intelligence sources and methods and notification to all intelligence authorities concerned; and (4) prompt notification to all official recipients that an unauthorized disclosure has occurred, together with advice of remedial action to be taken and guidance for responses to inquiries from public media representatives that may result from the compromise.

5. Take fully into account, in proposing the release of any intelligence derived from a joint project in the intelligence community, the interests of any other members of the intelligence community which might be concerned. If a department or agency authorizes the disclosure of sensitive

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intelligence from such a source, that agency is responsible for informing other USIB members of the action. Special attention should be given to defining the precise limits of the disclosure and to cautioning against inadvertent elaboration or extension beyond those limits.

6. In conjunction with appropriate authority, take, or assure that disciplinary action is taken where appropriate, in a just, clear, and definite manner which will demonstrate the extreme seriousness with which unauthorized disclosures are viewed. Where a violation of criminal statutes may be involved, any such case should be referred promptly to the Department of Justice.

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