

~~SECRET AMBLE~~

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

Ref. No: 2601/005

MINUTE PAPER

Date : 22/3/54

Subject:

CONTROL OF MCP SEARCH

Director.

It is submitted that responsibility for the control of MCP search should pass from D.S.B. to an appropriate authority in Singapore or the Federation. There are operational, practical and political reasons in support of such a change.

The problem is essentially a tactical one and has been characterised by periods of quiet but fruitless search enlivened by periods of great local but abortive activity. During these latter phases, the tempo of events has not admitted of the delays inherent in control at a distance and Singapore has correctly taken the initiative at these times.

Resources available, with the exception of portion of the AMF detachment at [redacted] are entirely [redacted] and are undoubtedly not as robust as anyone could wish. One assumes however that their magnitude is proportional to the priority accorded to the problem by the [redacted] authorities.

[redacted]
A signal from GCO addressed to D.S.B. and [redacted] said "Federation ... are critical enough of our thoroughness and interest as it is" to which [redacted] replied "Fully agree". For D.S.B. to be brought into disrepute with any authority in the Far East through circumstances beyond its control is not very satisfactory from an Australian point of view.

It is submitted that D.S.B. responsibility should be limited to:-

- (a) Agreeing with [redacted] what Australian resources should be permanently allotted to this problem and what additional resources under D.S.B. control should be made available in an emergency.
- (b) Provision of technical advice.
- (c) Backstop processing.

H. N. Berry
MS.

P.S. Pls see para 3

20/200/3

PA 7/6

*Note discussed during
Bonsall visit 10/12 May.
See record of
decisions of that
visit*

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RJ 7/5