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Copy No. 10 .....

18th May, 1953.

Annex IV to  
JIC(FE)(53) 19.

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SIGINT IN MALAYA.

The Conference discussed Sigint in Malaya, details of which are given at Appendix. The Director of Intelligence from the Federation and the Head of SIFE were present.

Recommendations:

2. The Conference recommends that the [redacted] be invited to approve this report and to forward it to the Chiefs of Staff requesting that:-

- (i) the Australian authorities be asked to give further assistance in providing additional operators for increasing the search and development effort.
- (ii) L.S.I.B. be invited to make arrangements for local recruitment of linguists in Malaya, when the need arises for immediate assistance in the interception of voice transmissions in languages and dialects not at present catered for.

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SIGINT IN MALAYA.

A continuous search for MCP radio transmissions has been carried out since 1948 both by the intercept station in Singapore and by detachments sent out at various times into the Federation of Malaya from Singapore.

2. In spite of this, no transmission identifiably originated by the MCP has so far been intercepted. The search has covered all suitable types of radio activity with the exception of short range tactical transmissions.

Information from Ground Sources.

3. Until early 1953 little information was available from ground sources on this subject. Lately however clear evidence has been provided by the Director of Intelligence that the MCP's interest in radio communications, virtually non-existent until the end of 1951, had been steadily increasing. Determined attempts were being made to establish a link between the Communist Central Committee and some of its agents in [redacted] it was possible that a further link of the same kind was planned between the Federation and [redacted]

4. There is still some doubt whether these attempts have been successful; clearly, however, a development of such MCP wireless activity can now be expected. On the other hand it is unlikely that there exists any internal link. If any such link were to be found it would probably be for policy control purposes.

Co-Ordination of Interception and Intelligence Research Efforts.

5. The improved flow of ground source information has made possible a much clearer definition of the Sigint target. Better contact between the Sigint organisation and the Federation authorities will now also ensure that intelligence which comes into the hand of either of these is rapidly available to the other for exploitation.

Strength and Disposition of Sigint Resources.

6. Four 24 hour positions are at present employed in Singapore on a systematic search of all frequencies likely to be used by the MCP. A further position provides material on a suspect network located in [redacted]

7. If evidence is found at any future date to connect a given transmission with the MCP an intercept detachment of suitable strength is ready to move to Kuala Lumpur at short notice to facilitate exploitation.

8. Until such a tentative identification can be made the search will be carried on from Singapore so as to obtain the benefit of rapid communication with [redacted] and Melbourne where specialised records and assistance are available.

Value and Deficiencies of Present Effort.

9. These arrangements provide the best possible chance under existing conditions of intercepting regular MCP activity and finding transmissions about which accurate details are available from ground sources.

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10. They do not, however, provide any assurance that transmissions which do not work on a firm schedule or with a distinctive procedure will be intercepted or recognised. It is highly unlikely that any proportionate increase in present resources would achieve a better result in the case of such activity.

11. Fixed DF stations will be in operation at Singapore and Labuan by July, 1953. In addition, the War Office is sending a transportable DF equipment in the near future. Until these come into action, insufficient facilities are available for the rapid location of suspect transmitters. The R.A.F. navigational DF station at [redacted] is giving valuable assistance, but is not properly equipped for this type of task.

12. There is a strong potential requirement for linguists to help with the identification and exploitation of suspect activity, especially in the case of voice transmissions. The Sigint organisation is aware of this potential requirement to send specialist linguists at short notice to Singapore but, in the case of certain languages and dialects, may not be able from its own resources to provide the necessary assistance.

Requirements Likely to Arise in Future.

13. Reserves of manpower at the Singapore intercept station are sufficient to handle a short-term increase in commitments by calling for volunteers off watch. The present operator strength is, however, inadequate to provide for a permanent increased commitment such as might result from a rapid expansion of MCF networks. The complement which is now up to full strength has been fixed in the hope that the balance of manpower required will be found by Australia. It is understood that proposals to this end are currently under review in Australia, but it appears unlikely that reinforcements will be provided in the near future.

14. Should MCF transmissions be found, the need for a cryptanalyst attached to the intercept detachment is almost certain to arise. There is at present no such specialist in Singapore, nor can a case be made for his attachment on the strength of existing requirements alone; but he could be provided at short notice by the Sigint organisation.

15. Certain specialised requirements may occur at a later date, such as the use of [redacted]

This type of operation cannot be forecast in advance; the various Headquarters involved have, in so far as possible, been warned about the outline of problems likely to occur; they have invariably offered all assistance in their power should the need arise.

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