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SDWG-M-46



25 November 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: COMIREX Sanitization and Decontrol  
Working Group

Special SDWG Meeting on: Latent Imagery and Security Problems  
Associated with the Disposal of  
Reconnaissance Film

1. Acting on the direction of the Chairman, COMIREX, the SDWG met on 2 October to discuss various security problems associated with the disposal of reconnaissance film following the silver recovery process. Referring back to Colonel Gaston's briefing of the previous week, SDWG identified the immediate problem as the possibility that polyester film subjected to stripping through the caustic separation process presently favored by the Air Force might retain a latent image. Controlled burning leaves no residue to worry about and there is no problem if stripped film were destroyed by shredding. Stripped film is emphasized because imagery has been reconstructed from shredded film which had not been stripped of emulsion.

2. Concentrating on the stripping process, SDWG next elected to confine itself to the problem within the United States and the handling of DPs. At overseas Recce Tech units stripped film may be burned without running afoul of air pollution authorities. Furthermore, even though laboratory tests were to establish that stripped film could not contain a latent image, the chances are that the baling and return to the U. S. of the polyester base, and arrangement to resell to such potential consumers as paint companies, would not be profitable. The reason for limiting consideration to the DP was based on the fact that ONs are normally stored as part of the permanent reconnaissance library record. Limiting consideration to the DP also removes the problem of the titling. Titling on the ON is embossed but this obviously does not apply to the DPs.

3. The SDWG did establish an order of tasks:

a. The first task is for [redacted] and [redacted] to continue for one month with certain

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tests designed to determine whether there is a latent image in film which has been subjected to the normal stripping process.

b. If the tests show the latent image to exist, SDWG will be provided with a report as to how additional processing might eliminate this hazard. Some courses of action discussed were:

(1) destruction of the molecular image in the base through application of UV.

(2) use of a double strip process--running the film twice through the caustic solution.

(3) in order to insure removal of the subbing, which some feel stripping cannot guarantee, subject the film to a flammable solvent process--this is quite dangerous to personnel.

c. If at the end of a month no latent images have appeared, SDWG will expect a negative report with precise information as to how far research has been pursued and what other experiments need to be conducted. [ ] has talked in terms of two man years, to be exhaustive./

4. In reply to a suggestion from the Chairman that, if a latent image were to appear, and it would be hard to insure against such appearances, the community should resort to controlled burning, the consensus of the experts was that this represented a disproportionate cost and should not be considered. The Mark Systems Incorporated process and UV treatment is also expensive--about ten times that of just stripping chemically. It would be more economical to subject the stripped film to a very fine shredding process and dispose of it as garbage.

5. At the urging of Major Owens, the Chairman agreed that as soon as examples of latent imagery are available SDWG will try and work with the Office of Security to evaluate the security

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risks of the latent imagery. The Chairman noted, however, that it will be difficult to make specific recommendations on a problem which promises to be so nebulous. At this point it is doubtful that those so far providing technical back up to the SDWG, or other scientific elements who have been studying this problem, Mr. McCamey in the Bureau of Standards was mentioned, would ever admit that examples of latent imagery that might be produced could be considered typical.

6. [redacted] also noted that if at the end of a month no latent imagery has appeared the same corps of experts will still be unwilling to agree this is proof that the present stripping effectively removes all latent imagery and insures security. Out of respect for these uncertainties the Chairman requested that during the next month an effort be made to find out from the GSA whether there is a real market for the stripped polyester film. This question actually can be divided into two parts:

a. Is it economically feasible for strip processing facilities to store and turn over rolls of strip polyester base to GSA for successful marketing; or

b. Should there be a security problem, can GSA market finely shredded stripped film? [Owing to the fact that the polyester film is rapidly replacing tri-acetate, the handling and marketing of the latter was not explored in any depth.]

[redacted signature box]

Chairman  
SDWG

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- 4 DIA TCO (Mr. Hughes)
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17 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Sanitization and Decontrol Working Group

SUBJECT: Latent Imagery and Security Problems  
Associated with the Disposal of  
Reconnaissance Film (SDWG-M-46)

1. In response to the 2 October 1968 request of the SDWG, the Exploratory Laboratory of NPIC has provided the attached analysis, pertinent to latent imagery and security problems associated with the disposal of reconnaissance film. It is requested that members study [ ] report in anticipation of an early meeting on this subject. The Chairman, SDWG notes that the two questions posed in paragraph 6 of SDWG-M-46 are now reduced to one, namely, is there a market for finely shredded stripped film?

2. With reference to the meeting of 3 December and for your information:

a. [ ] advises that Commander Myles has submitted a draft reply to "Clarification of COMIREX-D-2.7/5 for the British" which looks good and CIA plans to transmit to London.

b. "Canadian Problems with Sanitization of Mapping Materials" does not appear to be a problem requiring further urgent action.

c. The "Request to Downgrade BLACK SHIELD in Target Folders" has been forwarded to the Board, and a reply as to whether this will have been approved by telephone or might require consideration at a USIB meeting should be available on 20 December.

d. The question of "Release of Sanitized T-KH Data for Foreign Governments" is still in the hands of the DIA and CIA members.

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e. On 11 December the Chairman submitted a draft of minutes on "New Problems with Controlled Dissemination" to the CIA member for comment. [redacted] has requested [redacted] help in identifying the precise problems associated with the NIS. It is understood that [redacted] may have a recommendation which the CIA and DIA members may wish to discuss before returning to SDWG. The Chairman, SDWG would prefer to concentrate at this point on the NIS problem, as he expressed himself at the meeting, [redacted] feels that the broad question of avoiding possible abuses by regulation instead of discipline may be time consuming, if not also redundant to work done in 1964 and 1965.

f. With regard to [redacted] problem on the "world fact book", it is the Chairman's understanding that DIA has submitted a very helpful suggestion which may solve this problem without need for further discussion.

3. The undersigned expects to be in the office over the holiday period and will be prepared to call a working group meeting upon the request of any member--giving consideration, of course, to holiday plans and the Hong Kong flu.

[redacted]  
Chairman  
SDWG

Attachment

State SDWG Member w/o attach  
DIA SDWG Member w/attach  
OACSI SDWG Member w/attach  
ONI SDWG Member w/attach  
AFNIN SDWG Member w/attach  
NSA SDWG Member w/attach  
CIA SDWG Member w/attach  
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[redacted] NPIC w/attach  
SAFSS SDWG Consultant w/o attach  
Chairman, SDWG w/attach