



Extracts from  
the  
Brownell Board  
Report

~~TOP SECRET SUEDE~~

Page 8 (Subparagraph (f))

(f) Within AFSA itself, the Director should serve for a longer term than the two-year rotational term provided for at present. He must be a man of the highest competence. Although qualified witnesses have recommended to the Committee that he be a civilian, we believe that, on balance, the position should be held for the first term of at least four years by a career military officer on active or reactivated duty status, and that he should enjoy at least 3-star rank while he occupies the office. He should have a civilian deputy; and in other respects (particularly in the field of research) the development of civilian careers should be encouraged to a much greater extent than at present. If, as things develop, it should later appear that a civilian could better qualify for the position of Director, we recommend that no sense of tradition or vested military interest be allowed to stand in the way of his appointment.

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Recommendations as to organization within AFSA itself.

The Committee received much testimony from both military and civilian sources very critical of the situation that exists today within the AFSA organization. This criticism was directed against the present organizational structure of AFSA and not against the capability or efficiency of any individual occupying a responsible position.

At present the directorship of AFSA is rotated among the Services, each incumbent holding the position for two years. There was not a single individual whom the Committee questioned on this point who did not express the opinion that this term was too short. Recommendations varied from three years to an indefinite or "career" period. Everyone agreed that under the present setup it took a year for the Director to get his feet under him and that he really only became well trained to perform his difficult task shortly before his term of office expired. The Committee recommends strongly that AFSA should be administered by a director with a substantially longer term of office.

The witnesses differed in their opinion as to whether the director should be an officer or a civilian. These differences by no means followed the status of the particular witnesses; one of our senior generals stated flatly that he should be a civilian, and some other officers said that they did not think it made great difference whether he was a civilian or not. The majority, both military and civilian, expressed the strong view that, rightly or wrongly, a civilian would have a harder road, and greater difficulties to overcome, unless by chance he was a retired officer with good military experience behind him. This question would of course depend in any particular case on the particular personality involved. The primary qualification which should determine the selection of the director is competence, and the thoroughly competent individual may be found in any field of endeavor. Nevertheless, on balance, the Committee feels that initially the position should be held by a career military officer on active or reactivated duty status, enjoying at least three-star rank during the period of his incumbency. He should be appointed preferably for a term of

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6 years, but not less than 4 years. If, as things develop, it should ultimately appear that a civilian could better qualify for the position, it is strongly recommended that no sense of tradition or vested military interest be allowed to stand in the way of his appointment. If the director is an officer, he should have as his deputy a career civilian. The Director should be designated by the President on the nomination of the Secretary of Defense.

Below the directorate level, senior positions should be filled by individuals, whether officer or civilian, who have a career interest in the field of communications intelligence. We do not believe that these positions should be limited to civilians, because we are impressed by the testimony given by many witnesses as to the importance of familiarizing the Service organizations in the field with AFSA organization and operations by rotating officers from AFSA into field positions and then back again. Also, the long experience of several Navy officers is one of the great assets of the activity today. On the other hand, it would be a major mistake to limit the senior positions to officers, because it is of the greatest importance to encourage civilians to make careers in the COMINT field by clear demonstration that senior positions will be available to them if their talents merit promotions.

We have been disturbed by the testimony as to the high rate of turnover among AFSA employees. This has been a tremendous handicap to the building up of an efficient organization, as well as a serious hazard from the point of view of security. One cause, emphasized by informed witnesses, appears to be that many of the civilian employees believe that no matter how long they work nor how expert they become, the top positions in the divisions will generally be filled by officer personnel of less experience and training than they. Another factor during the past year was undoubtedly the decision (subsequently cancelled) to move the entire AFSA establishment to Fort Know.

To produce COMINT material requires as high a professional skill as any other applied science, and perhaps cryptanalysis and intelligence based on cryptanalysis require longer training and experience than most other scientific fields. The COMINT agencies today are in poor position to compete for the people they need. They cannot offer comparable salaries; they cannot give the tangible rewards of public service such as the recognition of the community; they cannot offer the opportunity to acquire a skill usable in private life. We are not only not attracting capable young people in the numbers that are needed, but we are losing many that we have had in the past. Apparently there are only ten or fifteen top flight cryptanalysts left at Arlington Hall out of the much larger number who were in the COMINT effort during the War. In this connection, none of the so-called super-grades has been allocated to AFSA. Only under the present Director was application for such grades made; it is understood that the pending application is stalled today because all authorized super-grades have been allocated elsewhere in the Government.

The Committee cannot venture to prescribe methods of solving these personnel problems, except to emphasize what has been said as to the importance of making careers in the Agency attractive and to recommend that a study should be made as to the desirability of increasing salaries paid to the key individuals. On the military side, a corresponding study should be initiated

on the question of extending to the Army and to the Air Force the policy now in force in the Navy of making communications intelligence a career assignment, and of recognizing its importance by promotions to general or flag rank for those who achieve success in the field.

The Committee also adopts the recommendation made to it by SCAG (the Scientific Communications Advisory Group referred to more fully below) that the Director should have a civilian chief technical assistant who would have under him all research and development in the cryptanalytic field. This research work requires the employment of expert career men to an even greater extent than other AFSA departments.

The Director should provide for increased participation by representatives of each of the agencies eligible to receive COMINT in those offices of AFSA where priorities of intercept and cryptanalysis are finally determined.

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Greater civilianization, according to SCAG, is absolutely necessary in that branch of AFSA which is charged with the conduct of technical research. Many scientists and mathematicians in recent years have felt the appeal of the importance and mystery of the COMINT effort, only to draw away upon developing closer contact because they have felt it impossible or frustrating (whether rightly or wrongly makes little difference) to work within the military hierarchy. It is SCAG's contention that AFSA has, because of difficulties in contract relations and errors of judgment, so injured its reputation in scientific circles as to make both companies and individuals somewhat wary of doing business with it. The contention is based upon an alleged lack of rapport between the military and the civilian, particularly in the field of abstract science and its appurtenances. There is probably much to be said on both sides, but civilianization of COMINT's more abstruse technical activities would probably do much to provide a remedy.

In such a highly technical field the Committee can do no more than record these responsible opinions furnished to it. It is entirely possible that the results of a better organized effort will be negative, but if they were only in part successful, they would produce information of much greater importance than we are now obtaining through the expenditure of much larger amounts of the more orthodox sources.