

CONFIDENTIAL

18 JUL 1979

2/week

HANDLING OF CRITICAL (CRITIC) INFORMATION (U)

1. Pursuant to NSCID No. 1, which describes the basic functions and objectives of United States intelligence, and NSCID No. 7, which authorizes the establishment of communications for the rapid transmission of critical information, the Director of Central Intelligence issued DCID 7/1 which establishes the policies and general procedures for the handling of such information. NSCID No. 7 also designates the Secretary of Defense as Executive Agent for the CRITIC Communications System. DoD directive 5100.19, of 19 March 1959, assigned responsibility for operational control of the system to the Director, National Security Agency. The information provided below is consistent with, and derived from, those documents. (C)

2. CRITIC information is defined as information concerning foreign situations or developments which affect the security or national interests of the United States to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the President or other members of the National Security Council. CRITIC information is sent at the highest precedence and by the most rapid means available. Specific formats and procedures are used in an effort to assure delivery within ten minutes to those Intelligence Community organizations and other appropriate Washington agencies and such other recipients as the DCI may designate. (C)

3. The National Security Agency exercises operational and technical control over the communications facilities specifically allocated for the timely handling of critical information. The Director, NSA sets the prescribed format which provides for the automatic override of all other high precedence messages and automatic delivery to the designated recipients. This delivery is accomplished by means of automatic system procedure at NSA Headquarters at Fort Meade which responds to an incoming CRITIC message bearing the appropriate address line (DIRNSA), the CRITIC precedence prosign (WW) and the DIRNSA routing indicator, [] The NSA CRITIC communications system accomplishes immediate and virtually simultaneous transmission of the CRITIC message to all intended recipients when the CRITIC message has been prepared, and received at

P.L. 86-36

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NSA review completed

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NSA Headquarters, with the appropriate message elements as described above.

4. Any official of the United States government may initiate a CRITIC message, and any appropriately secure means may be employed for its transmission to NSA. NSA, however, is the only element of government with the authority and the capability for the rapid, automatic and simultaneous dissemination of CRITIC messages to all intended recipients. (C)

5. Broad guidance relative to the CRITIC program within the Intelligence Community is contained in the "Handbook of Standard Operating Procedures for the Reporting of Critical Information", which was approved by the DCI on 15 April 1976. (C)

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ROUTING AND TRANSMISSION SLIP

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)

1. John Stein

2.

3.

4.

5.

Initials Date

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Action | File | Note and Return |
| Approval | For Clearance | Per Conversation |
| As Requested | For Correction | Prepare Reply |
| Circulate | For Your Information | See Me |
| Comment | Investigate | Signature |
| Coordination | Justify | |

REMARKS

I covered "critic" messages in DCI staff mtg. on 7/20 with both Turner & Carlucci present. I think Turner was satisfied with background.

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions

FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post)

Room No.—Bldg.

Phone No.

7/20

5041-102

★ U.S. G.P.O. 1977-241-530/3090

OPTIONAL FORM 41 (Rev. 7-76)
Prescribed by GSA
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DDA:DIWortman:kmg (20 Jul 79)

Distribution:

Orig - ADDO (via DDO Reg)

1 - DDA Subj w/bkgd from OC

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DD/A Registry

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Communications

ECHO-101