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25 May 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: DC/OS/ALT/TR

FROM: Chief, [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Pouch Communications -- Mail Security Threatened

1. I enclose an Associated Press article by James R. Polk, which appeared in the Mount Vernon Daily Argus on 21 May 1970, entitled "U.S. Mail Security Threatened by Pilfering Postmen". The article reviews thefts by postal employees and reports; "Registered mail, because of its value, has become an acute problem area for postal officials".

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2. [REDACTED] HEADQUARTERS communications have moved by registered mail for the ten years that I have been here without a single hitch in either direction. The article, while stressing that money is the primary lure in the pilfering, has nevertheless given me considerable concern over its implications. We do not send money in our pouches. But once a pilferer has opened our pouch in expectation of money, finds none, but does find some interesting literature, then what?

3. Remote though the chances of hitting one of our pouches (out of 82 billion pieces of mail yearly) may be, the concentration on registered mail as a target is what worries me. It is now, it seems to me, time to consider alternative methods of communication.

4. For example: How do other units [REDACTED] communicate? Does any one of them have a courier run? If yes, can we join them, adding our small pouch to the courier's load? We would certainly arrange our pouching schedule to conform to that of the courier.

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5. With reference to paragraph four above, I recall that many years ago, when I had been asked to be prepared to work with a high level dignitary in this area, the Chief of our local unit said, "We have safe communication with Washington in case you need it". This might have meant courier, it might have meant something else.

6. In view of the foregoing and the attached article, I ask that the appropriate desks at Headquarters review the [REDACTED] /Washington

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communications system presently in use, ascertain what other units in this area are doing, arrange to have us join them if they have a better or more secure system than ours or, alternatively, consider the possibility of creating a more secure communications system if, indeed, the registered mail system is as described in the Associated Press article.

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