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DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
Security Committee

file 4.3.2

SECOM-D-286

17 July 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Steering Group

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FROM:

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SECOM Member

SUBJECT: Zero Base Review of Clearances

1. At the 15 July 1980 meeting of the Steering Group, there were discussions related to the advisability of doing a Zero Based Review of current SCI access approvals. Some comments indicated an element of confusion. This memorandum is presented to document some DCI directions that may have a bearing on whether and when a Zero Base Review should be conducted. My observations are supported with copies of source material.

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a. There is no question that the DCI elected to have a Zero Based approach to clearances in all agencies and industrial contractors. He told Director, NSA this in May 1978. Tab A.

b. In his Notes from the Director of 11 October 1978 the DCI mentions that it is his intention that Zero Based Reviews become a long range and structured aspect of our security program and that they be carried out throughout the Intelligence Community. Tab B.

c. The DCI tasked the Security Committee in early November 1978 to start a Zero Based Review throughout the Executive Branch and in Industry. The Chairman, SECOM tasked his Chairman of the Compartmentation Subcommittee accordingly on 15 November 1978.

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CIA's Special Security Center, which had initiated trial Zero Based Reviews, was noted as offering a service of common concern in collecting information from contractors to be transmitted to sponsoring agencies for their action. Tab C.

d. The Chairman, Compartmentation Subcommittee of SECOM issued implementing orders to members on 15 December 1978. Tab D.

e. The NFIB Working Group on Compartmentation met on 19 December 1978 and raised the question of the Zero Base Review. Noting that the proposal for the [] Control System includes a recommendation that a Zero Based Review take place at the beginning of the implementation phase in order to better define and limit the population which will be given access within the [] system, it seemed to be redundant, if not burdensome to conduct two such reviews within such a short period of time. [] SA to the DCI wrote and informed him of the observation. [] argued that the ground rules for justifying product access under the present ground rules are much looser than the ground rules under the [] system so that the Zero Base Review conducted at that time would not be of much value when we go to implement []. On the other hand, it was noted that the system for operational compartments is essentially the same in both worlds so that a Zero Base Review of operational clearances conducted at that time would be highly useful and give us a leg up when the new system starts. The DCI approved [] recommendation to defer the Zero Base Review product clearances until the implementation phase of the [] program but to complete the review for holders of operational clearances. Tab E.

f. On 8 Jan 1979 the Chairman, SECOM instructed the Compartmentation Subcommittee accordingly. Tab F.

2. The CIA elected to have the Special Security Center proceed with the Zero Base Review of both product and operational accesses in industry facilities with CIA contractors. Offers were made and rejected by many members of the Community. It was accepted by Program A and C. Only SI, TK [] accesses were reviewed.

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3. From March to the end of FY 1979, [redacted] industrial contractors holdings were reviewed. The net result of the review was a reduction of 7.2% in the number of personnel with any access and a reduction of 13.2% in the number of accesses held. (Some people lost some of their tickets but held others - hence the difference between figures for people and accesses). The Zero Base Review has continued through the third quarter of FY 1980 with almost similar results; reduction of 7.2% of people and 13.4% of access approvals.

4. These facts combined with the numbers recently developed in the recent in-house survey, support the contention that there is merit in a Zero Base Review.

5. There is no question of the DCI's intention in this regard and he anticipates that a Zero Base Review will be made at the beginning of the [redacted] implementation phase.

6. Note should be made of the argument presented to him in petition for postponement of his call - "the ground rules for justifying product access under the present compartmented systems are much looser than the ground rules under the [redacted] system." This seems to imply that a different criteria for access will be applied, one that will be tighter. Accordingly, your caution against members planning for a one-for-one substitution without review is well taken and should be underscored at subsequent meetings of the Steering Group.

Attachments

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SECOM [redacted] (18 July 80)

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