MEMORANDUM FOR: READ ADMIRAL LESLIE C. STEVENS

CHIEF, JSPD, JCS

SUBJECT:

Security Considerations in Preparation

of Covert Vessel Irmay.

REFERENCE:

T. S. Memo from ONI, OP322Th Ser 00036/51 dated 15 Jan 51, enclosing copy of DIO 6MD

Secret Ser 002X32, dated 9 Jan 51.

I note that you have received a copy of the reference document and, therefore, believe you would be interested in the memorandum prepared for me on this subject.

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY CENTRAL INTELLIBENCE ASENCY SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3828 NAZIWAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT **DATE 2007**

FRANK G. WISNER Assistant Director for Policy Coordination

Enclosure:

T. S. 54284 dated 24 Jan. 51

EE-I/[7/1b 24 January 1951

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SUBJECT:

Security Considerations in Preparation of

Covert Vessel Irmay.

REPERENCE:

T. S. Memo from ONI, OF 32274 Ser 00036/51 deted 15 Jan 51, enclosing copy of DIO 6ND Secret Ser

0021)2, dated 9 Jan 51.

1. In view of the extress sensitivity of the proposed mission of the covert vessel Irmsy, the Eastern European Division, OPC, has handled this project from Its inception in a menner believed consistent with the highest security precautions, and has purchased, overhauled the vessel, and installed all special equipment with a minimum revolution of government interest. The general principle followed was based on the decision that information of any sort regarding the vessel and its proposed use would be divalged only on a "need to know" basis. The following discussion of the development of this program illustrated how rigidly this was followed:

a. Inspection and Purchase. The Irmsy was purchased through private channels which cannot be traced to the U.S. Government. A well-known private yachteman secured the services of a leading pacht broker and following an extensive survey of a number of possible vessels, bought the Irmsy after OPC had properly satisfied liteoff that this vessel would meet its operational requirements.

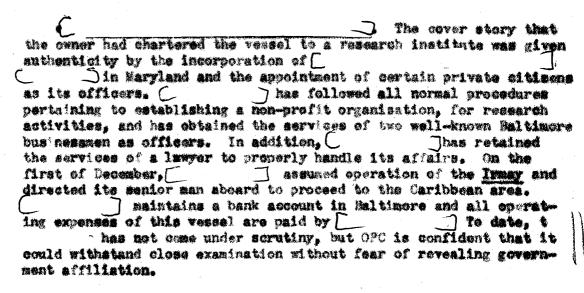
Since it was necessary to put the ship in first-class shape and to install a considerable amount of special equipment aboard, the vessel was put in a small yard in Saltimore by the owner, who personally directed the work. Governise, it was explained to all interested parties that the owner was in the process of writing a charter for a two to three-year period with a marine research organization, which explained the extensiveness of the job and the installation of special equipment. Any sensitive equipment was brought into the yard in secure manner over weekends and was immediately put into two locked rooms which had been specially constructed to hold this equipment. So workmen other than OPC employees were permitted entry to these rooms. By all reports, the special equipment was considered by all who had any contact with it to be scientific equipment installed by the Institute.

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- d. Registry. As a further security measure, the ostensible owner was directed to change the registry to Panamanian. This has been accomplished.
- was the owner's responsibility to provide a complete crew. Obtaining a satisfactory, capable captain was naturally the key to development of any good crew. After screening a large number of qualified prospects, Captain Helmes was selected because of his wide experience in yachting and extremely favorable references received. In a hort order, he assembled a crew, which was described from the start as being a good notch above average, both in respect to character and knowledge of yachting. As soon as the various crew members were recruited, the owner transferred personnel background data to OPC and classances were obtained in all instances before the vessel was ready to depart. It is important to point out that the owner and this office screened all personnel considered very carefully and exercised their best judgment in selecting the final complement for this very important project.

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details of this ship. Final details including notification of expected arrival and information on registry change are currently being cabled to CINCHIM.

2. From the foregoing, it is believed that the Mastern Muropean Division, OPC, took every precaution to maintain the security of this project up to the moment when Captain Holmes became guilty of the severe security violation which was reported in the reference memorandum. It was apparent to QPC that a serious breach of security had occurred when telephoned on 29 December. To maintain the security of the mission, of immediately contacted Mr. Frank E. Russell Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Customs and requested that he stop the threatened inspection of the vessel by Mr. Morkins of the Miami office of the Bureau of Gustoms. Mr. Russell was also asked to advise Gustoms officials in other ports of the true status of the vessel. Thanks to the reference document, the Fastern European Division, OPC, learned on 17 January the identity of the individual charged with the security violation and has already laid plans to secure his replacement and return Captain Leslie Holmes to the United States for further investigation of these charges and such action as is deemed advisable.

3. In the light of this experience, the Eastern European Division, OPC, will in the future advise the Office of Maval Intelligence of any Tastern European Division, OFC, operations that have any bearing upon the Office of Haval Intelligence. Further, other authorities such as the Sureau of Customs will likewise be properly advised of Mastern European Division, OPC, operations whenever appropriate.

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