

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 6, 1962

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NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 170

TO: The Secretary of State ✓
The Secretary of Defense
The Attorney General
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Intelligence Collection Through Audio Surveillance
(President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
Recommendation No. 35)

In its June 26, 1962 report to the President, the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board made recommendations on the subject as set forth in the attached excerpt from the Board's report.

The President has approved the Board's recommendation. Accordingly, it is requested that appropriate implementing action be taken and that a joint report on the progress made in carrying out the recommendation be furnished to the President and to the President's Board by September 15, 1962.

McGeorge Bundy
McGeorge Bundy

Attachment:

Excerpt from the Board's report.

cc: The President's Foreign Intelligence
Advisory Board
(Attention: Mr. J. Patrick Coyne)

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NLK-08-219

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.6
NLK-01-337-5-1-3
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By MAD NARA Date 9/09

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arise in countersurveillance at which time an adequate level of support could be undertaken. However, one action which should be taken immediately is to determine those particularly sensitive U. S. installations overseas in which security protection is of major importance, and there install shielded soundproof rooms, the adequacy of which has been established by both governmental and private research.

-2-

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Intelligence Collection Through Audio Surveillance

The Board has been constantly seeking to find additional means through scientific research and development whereby hard intelligence can be obtained upon which national policy and action can be reliably undertaken. Such a field exists potentially in the field of audio surveillance.

A panel of Board members has made a preliminary study of the level of effort on the part of the Central Intelligence Agency in the research, development and operational use of audio surveillance devices and techniques for intelligence purposes. Based on this study, the Board finds that: (a) although audio surveillance techniques have potentialities for providing a means of acquiring reliable, hard intelligence not otherwise obtainable by our Government, the limited capabilities of present equipment have precluded the Central Intelligence Agency from successful audio surveillance penetration of intelligence targets within countries of the Soviet bloc; (b) further advances in the state of our audio surveillance art are not likely to result from applied research efforts on the scale presently being pursued by our Government; and (c) the full potentialities of audio surveillance for intelligence purposes have not been thoroughly explored as a major scientific undertaking.

While we recognize that one cannot be assured that such an effort would prove successful, we feel that the potential value of audio surveillance for purposes of intelligence collection warrants further examination. Accordingly, we recommend that as a joint effort the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency (a) make an operational analysis of existing and potential use of audio surveillance as an intelligence collection technique; and (b) develop a plan, employing the best resources available to the Central Intelligence Agency and the military services [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for the development of audio surveillance devices and components whose reliability and performance characteristics would meet specified operational intelligence requirements; and (c) estimate the results which might be expected, within defined dollar limitations, from a major research and development effort designed to produce practicable audio surveillance systems for the acquisition of intelligence in the environment of clandestine collection activities and of counterintelligence operations.

In the event aggressive action is taken in the field of audio surveillance, it is our feeling that new problems and new opportunities will

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E.O. 13526, SEC. 3.5
By [REDACTED] NARA, Date 7/14