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TLO/008

Wednesday 31 July 1957.

The Head of Telecommunications Group,
Weapons Research Establishment,
Salisbury,
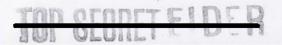SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Dear Mr Strath,

INFUSE.

The attached papers on this subject call for some comment.
It is apparent that the Effigy project (which is the large general-
purpose computer being supplied by NSA) has top priority and that H
in particular has only a minor interest in Colorob (his remark
recorded at the top of page 7 of the minutes can leave no doubt of
this). However the Director GCHQ effectively dispels any fear that
DSB might be left holding a rather sick baby, and after a long
discussion with Bob Botterill and John Duffill I can report that there
is no lack of confidence here, In a general way the intention is to
proceed precisely as planned i.e. install the machine and simultan-
eously organize and train the programming and operating personnel
under Tony Eatway (who arrives in Melbourne on 5th September).

Detailed comment on the minutes is as follows:

4.   Bob says that a decision to employ an operator has been taken
      but the post has not yet been approved. You will note that
      T Group's function in relation to the project has been neither
      accurately or fully stated: this may well be due to inaccurate
      minute-taking as the Director DSB is well aware of our
      responsibilities, as are most of the people concerned at GCHQ.
      For this reason I do not feel this is a point worth taking up
      but I would be grateful for your direction.

5(a) The Director DSB mentions "leaning on the programming
      experience of GCHQ". Both Bob Botterill and John Duffill say
      that it has been DSB's intention to be self-sufficient in
      programming and add that the programming team is a strong one
      even by GCHQ standards. It has been assumed that programming
      details will be exchanged between DSB and GCHQ and that GCHQ's
      advice will be available on particular issues, but this is not
      quite the same as "leaning on GCHQ". Bob says he has always
      envisaged DSB programs being written at DSB.

      Bob emphatically disagrees with W65's comment about Infuse
      being employed on ████████████████ for perhaps as much as
      two years using programs already written.

5(b)(i) I don't think H's observation that he had no firm
         requirement for a plugboard should cause any surprise: I
         always understood at GCHQ that Colorob was intended for fairly
         long jobs and so H only confirms the policy. There does not
         seem to be any action at this end until we see what Alan Bruce
         has to say, and in view of the Director's minute I feel fairly
         sure that GCHQ will take responsibility for producing the
         plugboards (perhaps by contract).

5(b)(ii) The multiplier seems to have been put in the "too-hard" basket. Tony doesn't say that a programmed multiplier uses too many of the machine's resources but if this is the case it might be easier and cheaper to provide more of the standard units. A reply has not been received to the letter sent to GCHQ on this subject. (You have a copy -- MH/RDB/067 of 28/5)

5(b)(iii), (iv) and (v) These will undoubtedly be problems in the future but there doesn't seem any point in getting too wrapped up in them at this stage.

6(d) Bob Botterill also disagrees with this: there are many other tasks.

7. I wonder whether we have given enough consideration to the Chairman's opening remark: Cecil Glass has frequently hinted at the same thing. If we have any adverse criticism to make it should perhaps be that the difficulties of bringing one machine into service whilst building another were not foreseen.

Returning to the general picture would you agree that none of this affects our immediate installation plans in any way ? No doubt the Director, on his return, will be able to give us some background on "GCHQ's (changed?) position in the light of recent developments".

I have discussed the draft of this letter with Mr. Perrin who agrees with the contents and has promised to take up any issues for us. As the Director will be back next week he has suggested we might wait for his observations.

Is there any action you would like me to take on any aspect of this ?

Yours sincerely,

(E.T. Robinson).
TLO.

Copy to: AD
             MH