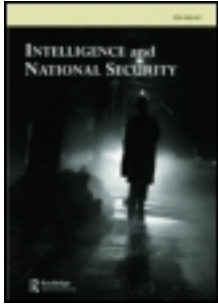


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## Intelligence and National Security

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fint20>

### The cold war, the JIC and British signals intelligence, 1948

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Published online: 02 Jan 2008.

To cite this article: Richard Aldrich & Michael Coleman (1989): The cold war, the JIC and British signals intelligence, 1948, *Intelligence and National Security*, 4:3, 535-549

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02684528908432015>

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# The Cold War, the JIC and British Signals Intelligence, 1948

RICHARD ALDRICH AND MICHAEL COLEMAN

Under the auspices of the 'Thirty Year Rule', significant quantities of diplomatic and military records have now been released relating to the early years of the Cold War and to other contemporary events. Yet in sharp contrast very little documentation is at present available to indicate the scale and direction of the British intelligence effort during the early years of the Cold War. In particular the role in these events of the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) at Eastcote on the outskirts of London<sup>1</sup> and its various regional out-stations has remained very obscure.<sup>2</sup> This article attempts to analyse the available documentation relating to Britain's signal intelligence priorities as defined by the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) during a crucial period of the early Cold War, the late spring of 1948. It also explores the evidence for British success against high-priority signals intelligence targets and suggests that the results were, at best, disappointing. Britain enjoyed no post-war equivalent to the extraordinary achievements of Ultra during the Second World War.

For the JIC and for British defence planners the spring and early summer of 1948 constituted an unsettled period dominated by accelerating East-West tensions in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The previous year had produced the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, to which the uncompromising Soviet response had been the formation of the Cominform. The spring of 1948 brought the Soviet coup in Czechoslovakia and Soviet pressure upon Scandinavia, events which spurred the completion of the Brussels Treaty and also led to highly secret negotiations at the Pentagon in Washington between British, American and Canadian officials seeking to explore a framework for a future North Atlantic alliance. By early April 1948 the West had begun to experience its first serious difficulties with rail transport to its sectors in Berlin, pre-figuring a major confrontation over that city that would result in the Berlin Airlift and the despatch of American B-29 bombers to Britain during the autumn of the same year. In the Middle East and Asia, Britain had cause for concern about the situation in Palestine, Indochina, China and Korea, although in Malaya the outbreak of the 'Emergency' was still some months away.<sup>3</sup> Faced with a considerable range of problems and potential threats how did the JIC choose to order their signal intelligence requirements?

### THE JIC AND SIGNALS INTELLIGENCE PRIORITIES

Some light is thrown upon this elusive subject by a four-page report entitled 'Sigint Intelligence Requirements – 1948', which was prepared by the JIC in April 1948. This intriguing document identified 47 general target areas for Britain's signal intelligence effort and divided them into five different levels of priority.<sup>4</sup>

This list of signals intelligence targets had been prepared by the JIC in its capacity as one of the two major sub-committees serving the Chiefs of Staff (COS), and hence it concerned itself primarily, though not exclusively, with military subjects.<sup>5</sup> In this case the JIC was working within the strict definition of its duties laid down by the recently re-drafted JIC charter of 27 February 1948 under which it was supposed to give 'higher direction to operations of defence intelligence and security'.<sup>6</sup> In practice, the remit of the JIC seems to have remained wider than this new charter suggested for it actually concerned itself with a broad range of subjects. As if to emphasize this fact, the JIC continued to be chaired by a senior Foreign Office official, at this time Sir William Hayter.<sup>7</sup> Hayter had recently succeeded Sir Harold Caccia, the latter having chaired the JIC since the departure of Victor Cavendish-Bentinck at the end of the Second World War.<sup>8</sup>

The identification and ranking of signals intelligence targets for defence purposes appears to have been a contentious business as the JIC paper in question had not yet been awarded the designation 'Final' by the COS and had already been twice sent back to the JIC for re-drafting. Because of its advanced state of drafting the general patterns of priority and emphasis can be identified from this document.<sup>9</sup>

In the paper, the JIC gave top priority to the acquisition of signals intelligence concerned with four areas of Soviet activity related to strategic air attack and defence. These were the development of Soviet atomic, chemical or biological weapons; other new Soviet weapons; the Soviet Air Force; and guided weapons. This emphasis was a reflection of the intense concern which had been displayed by the COS from as early as 1944 at the likely post-war disparity between the strength of military forces in Western Europe compared with those of the Soviet Union.<sup>10</sup> This concern had been exacerbated during June 1945 and again in July 1946 by two detailed studies that emphasized the radical scientific and technical developments that had recently taken place in the field of 'weapons of mass destruction' and in associated methods of strategic delivery, particularly the guided rocket. These reports noted that in contrast to the wide dispersal of population and infrastructure enjoyed by the United States and the Soviet Union, Britain was relatively crowded and hence seemed extremely vulnerable to these new weapons.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, it was the view of the COS that for as long as methods of attack remained far ahead of those of defence, the only credible British strategy appeared to be deterrence in peace, based upon the threat of an immediate pre-emptive air strike against the Soviet Union's own strategic capabilities in war. This British air offensive was to be launched from British bases in Britain, the Middle East and possibly South Asia. These ideas were outlined in a number of strategic planning papers prepared by the Joint Planning Staff. Typically, one such paper completed on 30 October 1947 stated quite unambiguously that with the advent of weapons of mass destruction:

The very existence of the United Kingdom will therefore depend upon its ability to hit back at the outset . . . [consequently] we must be prepared to take the offensive from the start and destroy the enemy's power to make war, in order that he shall not be able to launch modern weapons of war against the United Kingdom on a large scale.<sup>12</sup>

Planning for such an air-offensive began in late 1945, when technical sub-committees operating under the auspices of the COS drew up plans for attacks on all Soviet cities with populations of over 100,000 people.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, Soviet fighter defences probably constituted an important British signals intelligence target for some time before April 1948. The central place of the strategic air offensive in British post-war defence planning certainly explains the high priority accorded to the acquisition of signals intelligence on the 'Soviet metropolitan fighter defence force' in April 1948.<sup>14</sup>

The different levels of signals intelligence priority in this JIC paper offer a clear indication of the concerns of British defence planners in April 1948. In comparison with Soviet strategic offensive and defensive capabilities everything else was considered less urgent. Typically, despite the problems posed by Soviet intelligence, underlined by the Igor Gouzenkou affair and the subsequent arrest of Alan Nunn May, signal intelligence material relating to the 'organisation and activities of Soviet espionage and counter-espionage services' was accorded only a secondary level of priority, along with such significant issues as the 'question of succession to Stalin'. Although Britain encountered serious difficulties in the Middle East during the late 1940s subjects such as 'Arab nationalism and relations of Arab States with U.K. and U.S.A.' and also the 'Zionist movement including its intelligence services' were accorded only fourth and fifth levels of priority respectively.<sup>15</sup>

## THE JIC AND SIGNALS INTELLIGENCE DIVIDENDS

What was actually achieved as a result of the high level of priority allocated by the JIC to signals intelligence on Soviet strategic weapons? Some attempt can be made to discern this from the limited number of JIC papers for the late 1940s available to public inspection in the British archives. These papers suggest that the rate of success was not high.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, such JIC papers repeatedly make the assertion that: 'Our intelligence about Soviet development of atomic weapons is very scanty'.<sup>17</sup> Probably the most detailed indications can be derived from an unusually full JIC report of July 1948 entitled 'Soviet Intentions, Interests and Capabilities' which ran to 70 printed pages. This lengthy document constituted the JIC annual review of intelligence concerning the Soviet Union and the section within it dealing with the Soviet 'capacity to make war' seems particularly revealing. This report argued that:

Existing estimates of the date when the Russians began their programme and of their ability to overcome the technological difficulties involved suggest that they may possibly produce their first atomic bomb by January 1951 and that their stockpile of bombs in January 1953 may be of the order of 6 to 22.

However, most significantly, the JIC added an important caveat pointing out that the estimate was a worst case analysis and constituted in their view 'the maximum possible based on the assumption that the Russian effort will progress as rapidly as the American and British projects had done'.<sup>18</sup>

Consequently the JIC recommended making allowances for the 'probably slower progress of the Russian effort' which was likely to 'retard the first bomb by some three years'. Therefore, on balance, the JIC's tentative prediction was that the first Soviet bomb could be exploded in January 1954. It should be stressed that this prediction was made in July 1948, barely a year before the Soviets actually exploded their first nuclear weapon. The reluctance to make firm predictions and the inaccuracy of those that were offered is hardly surprising, given that the JIC paper in question implies that the JIC's calculations were based upon nothing more exact than a comparison with Western programmes and 'existing knowledge of the [uranium and thorium] ore supplies' in the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the JIC position was equally weak with regard to intelligence on other 'weapons of mass destruction'. In its section dealing with the Soviet biological weapons programme the JIC confessed that they were 'unable to assess her present and future potential in this respect' and so had decided to 'assume' that the Soviets had the necessary basic knowledge in this area. Estimates of Soviet chemical warfare capabilities were based, not unreasonably, upon what they might have learnt of German wartime developments in the field of

nerve gases.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, if British signals intelligence had made significant headway in the area of Soviet strategic weapons, it is not evident in these papers.

JIC papers for the late 1940s appear to display very detailed knowledge of Soviet dispositions in only two areas: the capabilities of the Soviet Air Force and Soviet troop movements in South East Europe. Yet it can be demonstrated that neither of these two areas necessarily offer convincing evidence of British success against high-level Soviet traffic. The relatively detailed information on the Soviet Air Force provided in the JIC papers of the late 1940s was probably obtained from German rather than Soviet sources. Professor Hinsley has already made clear that earlier JIC material prepared in 1943 assessing the Soviet Air Force was compiled by intercepting the communications of the German Air Force field signals intelligence organization operating on the Eastern Front. These German intercepts offered very detailed information on the capabilities of their Soviet opponents.<sup>20</sup>

In the immediate post-war period German intelligence continued to be a major source of intelligence on the capabilities of the Soviet Air Force. This is underlined by a JIC report circulated on 26 November 1945 entitled 'Potentialities of the Soviet Air Force'.<sup>21</sup> In this report the Secretary of the JIC, Colonel Haddon explained that the report had been written by the Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Intelligence) on the basis 'of such evidence as it has been possible to collect on the organisation and operations of the Soviet Air Force during the Russo-German campaign'.<sup>22</sup> This material may well have been supplemented by further information obtained from German intelligence archives and personnel captured in Europe during the spring and summer of 1945.<sup>23</sup> As with all JIC analyses of the Soviet Air Force during this period, the detail was impressive. There were precise estimates of annual aircraft production following the reconstruction of the Soviet aircraft industry behind the Urals, and of Soviet progress in the fields of radio and radar. For example, it was confidently asserted that 'of the total of 18,000 aircraft disposed in the West, 45% were fighters, 25% ground attack, 18% twin-engine bombers . . . the remaining 12% consists Naval and Misc. aircraft'.<sup>24</sup> Similar detailed material on the Soviet Air Force looms large in JIC analyses of the Soviet regional threat to the British position in South Asia in 1946. German material was probably responsible for the typically confident assertion that 'Past experience indicates that after a period of 6 days of intensive operations, its serviceability falls as low as 30 or 40 per cent of their force employed . . . it is an inherent weakness of the Soviet Air Forces'.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, available British material on the Soviet Navy does not seem to be of anything like the same quality.<sup>26</sup>

JIC reports for 1946 also appear to display some detailed knowledge of Soviet troop movements in South East Europe. Typically, a paper of

29 July 1946 on Soviet intentions in the Middle East, one of a monthly series on the region in mid-1946, felt confident enough to argue that the reduction of Soviet troop levels in Bulgaria implied a shift in Soviet objectives away from Turkey to Iran.<sup>27</sup> But there is no evidence to suggest that this conclusion was derived from high-grade Soviet signals. Two other possible sources must be considered here. First, British signals intelligence may well have had some success with the lower-level 'Y' traffic generated by large Soviet troop formations.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Andy Thomas has recently demonstrated that much British effort was directed towards just such low-grade VHF voice traffic and also direction-finding work during the late 1940s. Airborne platforms for signals intelligence and electronic intelligence or 'ferret' missions were being refined and employed operationally from the RAF Central Signals Establishment at Watton.<sup>29</sup> Some of this work was undertaken by Section 2 of the RAF Signals Directorate under Wing Commander L.T. Card in co-operation with GCHQ at Eastcote.<sup>30</sup> Secondly, it is clear that Britain was employing Photographic Reconnaissance Units (PRU) over Turkey at least as early as February 1947 and probably much earlier. Consequently such information may well have come from these or even from diplomatic sources.<sup>31</sup>

The question of Britain's signal intelligence capabilities in 1948 is somewhat clouded by the practice of inter-allied co-operation and exchange, particularly with United States agencies. It is clear that the exchange of intelligence continued smoothly in the post war period at a number of levels. Typically during 1946 the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington provided detailed summaries of the British JIC papers on the Middle East discussed above for the American Joint Chief of Staff.<sup>32</sup> In the specific field of signals intelligence much has been made of a range of understandings which constituted the UKUSA Agreement concluded in the late 1940s. The agreement provided for the exchange of signals intelligence between the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.<sup>33</sup>

Yet in the rush to emphasize the UKUSA Agreement and indeed its predecessor, the BRUSA Agreement of 1943, as landmarks in Anglo-American intelligence co-operation, historians have devoted insufficient attention to co-existing draconian restrictions governing the exchange of intelligence on atomic matters. In February 1946 the United States had been rocked by public revelations concerning the Gouzenkou affair and Soviet espionage within the wartime atomic programme. As a result the United States Congress passed the McMahon Act of 1946 which imposed drastic restrictions upon the exchange of atomic information with foreign states.<sup>34</sup> The precise manner in which this impinged upon the exchange of signals intelligence relating to the Soviet atomic weapons programme is not clear, but its general impact seems to have been considerable.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, in September 1949 the United States informed Great Britain that the Soviet



Union appeared to have detonated an atomic device only after considerable deliberation. This caution was the direct result of the provisions of the McMahon Act.<sup>36</sup> Provision for the exchange of atomic intelligence was improved in 1950 and again in 1955 and 1958.<sup>37</sup> However, from the limited evidence available, it appears that during the late 1940s the British COS were probably receiving little signals intelligence from the United States on the specific target area that they had designated their highest priority, the Soviet atomic weapons programme.

What is clear is that for Britain at least, Anglo-American co-operation in the signals intelligence field, and the consequent sharing of costs as well as intelligence product, was lent additional urgency by the financial crises suffered by Britain in the late 1940s and their severe impact upon provision for defence. Certainly both British attempts to intercept 'Y' communications and Britain's photographic reconnaissance capabilities (PRU) suffered as a result of the financial austerity of the late 1940s.<sup>38</sup> In February 1948 the RAF, who already handled the transmission of 'all Sigint traffic as an inter-service agreement' were considering economizing in the area of relay systems by integrating their world-wide facilities with those of Cable and Wireless Ltd. Co-operation between British government agencies and this company in the general area of communications was already considerable. In a remarkable debate that prefigured the problems encountered at GCHQ Cheltenham during the 1980s, the RAF chose to resist this economy for fear of industrial action by the technicians belonging to the company some of whom, they noted, were 'non-British personnel'.<sup>39</sup> The impact of economies was discussed by the Admiralty Board in April 1949 who lamented that some naval 'Y' stations were 'more than 10% short of their authorized personnel complements'. Moreover, while they recognized the valuable results that could be obtained from 'mobile Y stations' in wartime, there was 'little effort in this direction'.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, Britain's PRU capabilities were widely considered to be deplorable with no prospect of improvement.<sup>41</sup>

In sharp contrast to the long litany of Soviet subjects that predominate in the JIC signals intelligence target list of April 1948, the available evidence for success, particularly against high priority strategic targets, seems thin. Equally, a recent study of the extent to which both the United States and Britain were surprised by the Tito-Stalin split of 1948 seems, tangentially, to confirm this bleak picture for British efforts against Soviet and even Yugoslavian diplomatic communications during the same period.<sup>42</sup> Therefore the identification by the JIC in April 1948 of Britain's highest priority military targets appears to reflect the JIC's future hopes rather than current capabilities. Yet it seems that GCHQ continued to provide valuable material concerning other subjects much of which was derived from the communications traffic of other states.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, this apparent disparity

between all that was desired and what could be achieved in April 1948 may well explain the seemingly innocuous remark in this paper emphasizing that the JIC 'realize that technical factors will influence the final allocation of priorities'.<sup>44</sup>

## NOTES

The authors wish to thank Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and the Smuts Memorial Fund, University of Cambridge, for awards that facilitated the writing of this article. Transcripts from Crown copyright records in the Public Record Office and from India Office Library and Records appear by permission of the Controller, H.M. Stationery Office.

1. We have employed the title Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) throughout this article but the precise date when this term was adopted remains obscure. In any case many wartime documents employ the abbreviation B.P. to indicate Bletchley Park. Professor Hinsley refers to the Government Code and Cipher School (GCCS) throughout his official history of British intelligence during the Second World War. In contrast Nigel West suggests that the title GCHQ was adopted in 1939. Christopher Andrew argues that the change of title occurred after a re-organization that followed the departure of the Director, Sir Alastair Denniston, in 1942. James Bamford supports this latter contention, suggesting that the re-organisation took place in April–May 1943, coinciding with the BRUSA agreement of 17 May 1943. F.H. Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations*, Vol. I–III (London: HMSO, 1979-) *passim*; N. West, *GCHQ: The Secret Wireless War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p.112; C.M. Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* (London: Heinemann, 1985), p.488; J. Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace: America's National Security Agency and its Special Relationship with GCHQ* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1982), pp.313–14.
2. For a careful examination of the scope and scale of Britain's post-war signals monitoring effort, see Andy Thomas, 'British Signals Intelligence After the Second World War', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.3, No.4 (October 1988) pp.103–10. Some light is thrown on the immediate post-war work of Britain's regional sigint stations by Alan Stripp in 'Breaking Japanese Codes', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.2, No.4 (October 1987), pp.135–51.
3. For recent accounts of British policy during 1948 see, A. Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary* (London: Heinemann, 1983); R. Ovendale, *The English-Speaking Alliance: Britain, the United States and the Cold War, 1945–51* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985); C. Wicbes and B. Zeeman, 'The Pentagon Negotiations, March 1948', *International Affairs* Vol.60 (Summer 1983), pp.353–63; A. Schläim, 'Britain and the Berlin Blockade', *International Affairs*, Vol.60, No.1 (Winter 1983–84), pp.1–15. A persuasive analysis of the period 1945–47 is offered by R. Smith in his recent article, 'A Climate of Opinion: British Officials and the Development of British Soviet Policy, 1945–7', *International Affairs*, Vol.64, No.4 (Autumn 1988), pp.631–47.
4. JIC (48) 19 (0) (2nd Revised Draft), 'Sigint Intelligence Requirements – 1948', 11 May 1948, f.2, L/WS/1/1196, India Office Library and Records, London, (hereafter IOLR). This document is reproduced in full in Appendix 2.
5. The other major sub-committee operating under the Chiefs of Staff was the Joint Planning Staff, which dealt with operational matters and constituted the 'engine room' of British strategic planning in the 1940s and beyond.
6. JIC (48) 21, 'Charter for the Joint Intelligence Committee', 27 February 1948, f.2, L/WS/1/1051, IOLR.
7. George Hayter seems to have taken over as chairman of the JIC by 4 January 1947 when M.J. Cresswell, a Foreign Office official, signed a JIC paper and added 'for Mr Hayter', see JIC (47) 2 (0) (Final) 'India - Organisation for Intelligence', 4 January 1947, f.29,

- L/WS/1/1050, IOLR; see also JIC (47) 52 (0) Final, 'Possible Future of Palestine', 9 September 1947, f.01(1), L/WS/1/1162, IOLR.
8. The precise dates during which Caccia and Hayter occupied the Chairmanship are difficult to identify, not least because of the widespread practice of delegating JIC duties to subordinates. Hence the names appearing below JIC papers are often misleading. Many JIC papers do not identify the officials that oversaw their drafting. However it seems clear that Harold Caccia held the chairmanship for much of 1946; see for example, Caccia memorandum, 'General Review of Intelligence Concerning Russian Military Activities in Europe and the Middle East', 15 May 1946, N6092/5169/38, FO 371/56885, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO); see also JIC (46) 64 (0) Final, Limited Circulation, 'Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions in the Middle East', 6 July 1946, f.20, L/WS/1/1050, IOLR. Caccia's tenure is also mentioned briefly in P. Howarth, *Intelligence Chief Extraordinary* (London: Bodley Head, 1986), p.203.
  9. See note 4.
  10. For a lengthy discussion of the wartime attitudes of the COS and their sub-committees to the Soviet Union see J. Lewis, *Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Post War Strategic Defence, 1942-7* (London: Sherwood Press, 1988), pp.55-178.
  11. COS (45) 402 (0), 'Future Developments in Weapons and Methods of war', 16 June 1945, f.1A, AIR 2/12027; TWC (46) 15 (Revise), 'Future Developments in Weapons and Methods of War', 1 July 1946, DEFE 2/1252.
  12. JP (47) 139 (Final) Limited Circulation, 'World Strategic Summary for Use in Informal Discussions with Commonwealth Representatives', 30 October 1947, L/WS/1/1986, IOLR. For a discussion of this developing emphasis upon an air offensive from Empire bases see, R. Aldrich and M. Coleman, 'Britain and the Strategic Air Offensive Against the Soviet Union: The Question of South Asian Air Bases 1945-9', *History*, Vol.74, No.242 (October 1989).
  13. TWC (45) 44 (Revise), 'Target Ranges' and Annex 1 'Size and Range of Target Cities in the USSR', 5 January 1946, DEFE 2/1252, PRO.
  14. See note 4.
  15. *Ibid.*
  16. No attempt is made here to deal with the awkward area of Soviet intelligence traffic or 'Venona'. It appears that, with painstaking effort, a small proportion of this material was being broken in the West by 1948. On this matter see R. Manne, *The Petrov Affair* (Sydney: Pergamon, 1987), pp.177-9.
  17. JIC (47) 65 (0) Final 'Summary of the Principal External Factors Affecting Commonwealth Security', 29 October 1947, attached to JP (47) 139 (Final) Limited Circulation, 'World Strategic Summary for Use in Informal Discussions with Commonwealth Representatives', 30 October 1947, f.115, L/WS/1/1986, IOLR.
  18. JIC (48) 9 (0), 'Russian Interests, Intentions and Capabilities', 23 July 1948, f.28, L/WS/1/1173, IOLR. The predecessor to this paper was JIC (47) 7 (0) Final.
  19. *Ibid.*
  20. JIC (43) 64, 15 February 1943, annexed to COS (43) 55, CAB 80/39, PRO. For a discussion of this paper see F.H. Hinsley *et al.* *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations* Vol.II, (London: HMSO, 1981), pp.618-19. The 'Mustard' Enigma key employed by the German Air Force signals intelligence organization had been broken at a relatively early stage of the war, *ibid.*, p.69.
  21. JIC (45) 318 (0), 'Potentialities of the Soviet Air Force', 26 November 1945, N16448/16448/38, FO 371/48005, PRO. The ACAS (I)'s report was in fact drafted on 6 November 1945.
  22. *Ibid.* The Secretary, Colonel Haddon, had been succeeded by P. Gleadell by February 1948, see JIC (48) 21, 'Charter for the Joint Intelligence Committee', 27 February 1948, f.2, L/WS/1/1051, IOLR.
  23. The question of Britain's possible post-war employment of German intelligence personnel on the basis of the value of their knowledge of the Soviet Union awaits comprehensive investigation. However, substantial sections of the German intelligence organization, including their archival resources, appear to have remained operational after 1945 under the auspices of the United States. The British JIC may well have had access to

- these resources. On the American dimension of this matter see C. Simpson, *Blowback: America's Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War*, (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1988), pp.52-65.
24. JIC (45) 10 (0), 'Potentialities of the Soviet Air Force', 26 November 1945, N16448/16448/38, FO 371/48005, PRO.
  25. JIC (46) 10 (0) (Final), 'Threat to India's Land Frontiers', 15 April 1946, f.12, L/WS/1/987, IOLR.
  26. NID 16 memorandum 'Russian Naval Tactics', 10 November 1946, f.34, ADM 1/20030. Few comparable papers are available on Soviet land forces.
  27. JIC (46) 64(0) Final, Limited Circulation, 'Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions in the Middle East', 6 July 1946, f.20, L/WS/1/1050, IOLR. This paper was one of a series of monthly reviews of Soviet activities in the Middle East begun in May 1946. The first paper in this series was JIC (46) 38 (0) Final Revise, 'Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions in the Middle East', 14 June 1946, DO 35/1604, PRO.
  28. The precise size and scale of Britain's 'Y' interception effort in 1948 is difficult to assess. Organisational patterns and personnel figures for December 1945 are given in detail in FFC 36 PT T(i) edn.1, WO 212/228.
  29. Andy Thomas, 'British Signals Intelligence', p.104.
  30. These organisational details are based on two RAF Signals Directorate diagrams, c.July 1948, available in AIR 20/2794, PRO. A breakdown of the intelligence and security functions of this directorate is given in Appendix 1.
  31. Reference to COS (47) 69, 'Turkey, Photographic Recce', 3 February 1947, and JIC (47) 40, DEFE 4/6, PRO. These papers are closed to public inspection but the titles are (just) legible in the index in the front of the file into which they were originally bound.
  32. See for example British JIC, Memorandum for Information no.223, 'Russia's Strategic Interests and Intentions in the Middle East', 28 June 1946, sec. 1-C, ABC 336 Russia, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165, National Archives, Washington DC.
  33. On the UKUSA Treaty see J. Bamford, *The Puzzle Palace*, p.309, 315; J.T. Richelson and D. Ball, *The Ties That Bind: Intelligence Cooperation Between the UKUSA Countries* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1985), pp.142-4. C.M. Andrew has recently suggested that the UKUSA Agreement should be redated as 1948 rather than 1947. On this matter see C.M. Andrew, 'The Growth of the Australian Intelligence Community and the Anglo-American Connection', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.4, No.2 (April 1989), p.224.
  34. M. Gowing, *Independence and Deterrence: Britain and Atomic Energy, 1945-52* (London: Macmillan, 1974), Vol.2, pp.118-9.
  35. P. Malone, *The British Nuclear Deterrent* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp.70-1.
  36. R.G. Hewlett and F. Duncan, *Atomic Shield: A History of the United States Atomic Energy Commission* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1969), Vol.II, p.364.
  37. Ibid. p.365-5; Malone, *The British Nuclear Deterrent*, p.71; J. Baylis, 'The Anglo-American Relationship in Defence', in J. Baylis (ed.), *British Defence Policy in a Changing World* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p.78.
  38. The phrase 'Y intercepts' is generally used in British documents to refer to the interception of low level communications traffic, usually of a military or consular nature.
  39. Air Marshal Sir James M. Robb (VCAS) to Air Marshal Sir Hugh Lloyd (HQ ACFE), 6 February 1948, unfoliated, AIR 20/2794, PRO.
  40. Minutes of the Admiralty Board meeting for April 1949, f.60, ADM 167/133, PRO. We are indebted to Anthony Gorst of the London School of Economics for drawing this document to our attention.
  41. On the inadequacies of British photographic reconnaissance see AIR 8/1475, PRO *passim*.
  42. Robert M. Blum, 'Surprised by Tito: The Anatomy of an Intelligence Failure', *Diplomatic History*, Vol.12, No.1 (Winter 1988), pp.39-57.
  43. For an account of British interception of Iranian communications during the Azerbaijan crisis of 1945-46, see Stripp, 'Breaking Japanese Codes', pp.141-3.
  44. See note 4.

## APPENDIX 1

**RAF SIGNALS DIRECTORATE, 1948: SIGINT AND SECURITY SECTIONS**

**Director General of Signals – Air Vice-Marshall W.E. Theak**

**Director of Signals – Air Commodore E.H. Richardson**

**Deputy Director of Signals (B) – Group Captain T.P.P. Fagan**

**Policy for Radio Counter-measures (RCM) and Signals Security**

**Signals 2 – Wing Commander L.T. Card**

**Signals 2a – Squadron Leader W.C. Proctor**

**Organisation, establishment, personnel and communications matters in connection with Special Signals Units at Home and Overseas. RCM matters in connection with Central Signals Establishment Watton, Liaison with MOS and DGE on equipment planning for RCM and 'certain signal units'.**

**Signals 2b – Squadron Leader V.O. Joseph and Squadron Leader D.B. Esmonde-White**

**Liaison between Deputy Director of Signals (B) and GCHQ Eastcote**

**Signals 5 – Wing Commander E.C.C. Badcock**

**Radio Security – Squadron Leader E.J. Ryder**

**(a) Organisation and policy of call signs, delivery groups, and squadron code markings, Typex machine organisation and distribution. Monitoring and Police Watches. Meteorological Cyphers, Radio security and deception schemes.**

**(b) Allocation of codes etc to radio navigation aids and other signals equipment.**

**Cypher Security – Squadron Leader A.V. Day**

**(c) Planning and organisation of RAF codes and cyphers, Cypher security and scrutiny. Production of RAF Book Cyphers, Codes and Cyphers Procedures. Matters affecting loss and compromise of S. and C. publications.**

**(d) Records and Distribution of RAF and Interservices Combined codes and cyphers. Control supply and distribution of RAF One Time Pads. Cypher traffic returns, Signal security and cypher personnel.**

**(e) Matters affecting the distribution of Secret and Confidential publications at Home and Overseas. Printing of S. and C. signals, code cypher and radar publications. Editing and printing of 'S' and 'R' Communications Orders.**

(Information used in Appendix 1 is taken from two RAF Signals Directorate diagrams, c. July 1948, unfoliated, AIR 20/2794, PRO.)

## APPENDIX 2

The circulation of this paper has been strictly limited. It is issued for the personal use of *Brigadier Barker*.<sup>1</sup>

TOP SECRET

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*LIMITED CIRCULATION*.<sup>2</sup>

*J.I.C. (48) 19 (0) (2nd Revised Draft)*  
*11th May 1948*

**CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE**  
**JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE**

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***SIGINT INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS—1948***  
*Draft Report by the Joint Intelligence Committee*

We have examined our intelligence requirements for Defence purposes from Sigint sources in order to guide the Sigint Board in allocating its resources.<sup>3</sup>

2. We have consulted the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office (India Department).<sup>4</sup>
3. We have listed subjects of defence interest and have grouped them into five priority classes. These are attached at Annex. We realize however that technical factors will influence the final allocation of priorities.
4. Any further requirements that the departments may pass to L.S.I.C. should in future be related to this list, by bearing an indication of priority.<sup>5</sup>
5. We propose to review these requirements in a year's time.

Ministry of Defence S.W.I.  
 11th May 1948

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**ANNEX****PRIORITY LIST**

(No attempt has been made to arrange subjects in order of importance within each priority class)

**PRIORITY I**

1. Development in the Soviet Union of atomic, biological and chemical methods of warfare (together with associated raw materials).
2. Development in the Soviet Union of scientific principles and inventions leading to new weapons, equipment or methods of warfare.
3. Strategic and tactical doctrines, state of training, armament and aircraft of:-
  - (a) Soviet long-range bomber force.
  - (b) Soviet metropolitan fighter defence force (including P.V.O.)<sup>6</sup>
4. Development in the Soviet Union of guided weapons.

**PRIORITY II**

5. Manpower, call-up and mobilisation of Soviet armed forces.
6. Strategic and tactical doctrines, state of construction and training and construction programme (especially new types) of :-
  - (a) Soviet submarines.
  - (b) Soviet air forces, including armaments (other than in Priority I).
  - (c) Soviet airborne forces.
7. Strategic industries (e.g. armaments, aircraft, fuels, steel, chemicals, power) in the Soviet Union.
8. Strategic stock-piling in the Soviet Union.
9. Railways in the Soviet Union.
10. Soviet economic successes or reverses (such as the drought of 1946) likely to have an effect on foreign policy.
11. Organisation and activities of Soviet espionage and counter-espionage services.
12. Significant internal political development in Soviet Union (especially question of succession to Stalin).
13. Soviet reactions to associations (actual or proposed) between powers outside the Soviet sphere of influence.<sup>7</sup>
14. Soviet intentions in Germany and Austria, including Soviet employment of German Service and other personnel.
15. Organisation of, and foreign assistance, to Greek rebels (including any international brigade activities).

### PRIORITY III

16. Strategic and tactical doctrines, training and morale of Soviet armed forces (except as already detailed in I and II).
17. Organisation of Soviet armed forces, including high command and M.V.D troops.<sup>8</sup>
18. Unit and formation identifications, locations, and movements of Soviet armed forces, including M.V.D. troops.
19. Present and future warship construction (with details of performance and armament) in the Soviet Union.
20. Weapons and equipment in the Soviet army (technical details).
21. Airfields in the Soviet Union, and areas under Soviet influence.
22. Location, organisation and activities of defence research and development establishments in the Soviet Union.
23. Movements and activities of the leading personalities concerned with scientific research and development in the Soviet bloc and the Soviet occupied countries.
24. Scientific and technical education in the Soviet Union.
25. Movements of Soviet officials or service personnel to disturbed areas on the borders of the Soviet spheres of influence, such as Germany; Albania, India, Pakistan and the Far East.
26. Relations of India, Pakistan and neighbouring countries with foreign countries, particularly the Soviet Union, and with each other.
27. Soviet relations with the Jews in Palestine (particularly extent of Soviet and satellite assistance of emigration).
28. Organisation and activities of national communist parties and communist-inspired movements (including Cominform).
29. Indications of establishments in foreign countries in peace of Soviet agencies designed to assist the Soviet Union in war.

### PRIORITY IV

30. Soviet assistance to satellite armed forces.
31. Developments of bases, harbours and strategic waterways in the Soviet Union and satellite countries.
32. Soviet administrative network with particular reference to its vulnerability in war.
33. Arctic developments by Soviet Union, particularly extension of meteorological research and aircraft patrols.
34. Relations of satellite countries with neighbours outside Soviet Union.
35. Arab nationalism and relations of Arab states with UK and U.S.A.
36. Attitude of Soviet Union, France, Italy and Arab states towards future of ex-Italian colonies, especially Libya.



37. Organisation and activities of satellite espionage and counter-espionage.
38. Soviet intentions in India, Pakistan and Moslem countries.

#### PRIORITY V

39. Unit identification of Yugoslav armed forces.
40. Static defence system of the Soviet Union and satellite countries (other than P.V.O.)
41. Any marked increase of telecommunications facilities in frontier areas of the Soviet Union and satellite countries, notably Caucasus, Balkans, White Russia.
42. Contributions by the satellite countries to Soviet industrial potential.
43. Deliveries of grain from the Soviet Union to other countries.
44. Relations between satellite countries.
45. Soviet intentions in China and Korea.
46. Organisations and activities of Chinese penetrations of non-Chinese territories in the Far East, particularly their intelligence services.
47. Organisations and activities of:-
  - (a) Zionist movement including its intelligence services.
  - (b) Clandestine right wing French and Italian movements.
  - (c) Right wing movements in the satellite countries.

#### NOTES (APPENDIX 2)

- 1 This paper can be found at f.2, L/WS/1/1196, IOLR. Brigadier Barker had responsibility for defence matters within the Commonwealth Relations Office.
- 2 'Limited Circulation' indicated that fewer papers were printed and circulated than was usual for a JIC paper. Other especially sensitive TOP SECRET papers produced during this period sometimes received 'Restricted Circulation'.
- 3 The Sigint Board was responsible for the overall management of Signals intelligence but it seems to have met rarely after its reform in October 1943. Subsequently, many of its functions seem to have been carried out by the London Signals Intelligence Board and by regional committees. On this matter see F.H. Hinsley *et al.*, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations*, Vol.II (London: HMSO, 1981), pp.618-19.
- 4 The Commonwealth Relations Office (CRO) was a recent creation, combining the Dominions Office with the India Office. There was considerable continuity within departments inherited by the CRO from its two predecessors. Such consultation would probably have covered Communism and nationalism in British colonies and Commonwealth countries.
- 5 London Signals Intelligence Committee (L.S.I.C.). On this body see Hinsley, *British Intelligence*, Vol.II, pp.459-61.
- 6 PVO was the standard Soviet acronym for ground based anti-aircraft units. On this see, J.D. Douglas, *Soviet Military Strategy in Europe* (New York: Pergamon, 1980), pp.60-1.
- 7 This probably refers to the Marshall Plan, the recently signed Brussels Pact and the embryonic Atlantic alliance. It might also refer to a number of Pan-Asian initiatives that were currently under discussion in London and the Far East.
- 8 Ministry of Internal Affairs (M.V.D.) Until March 1946 this had been the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. On this see A. Knight, *KGB: Police and Politics in the Soviet Union* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1987), pp.36 and 315.