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Agency Information

Released under the John  
F. Kennedy  
Assassination Records  
Collection Act of 1992  
(44 USC 2107 Note).  
Case#:NW 55355 Date:  
11-24-2017

AGENCY : SSCIA  
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10014-10187  
RECORD SERIES : MISCELLANEOUS RECORDS OF THE CHURCH COMMITTEE  
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : 07-M-92

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA  
FROM :  
TO :  
TITLE : NSA MONITORING  
DATE : 09/09/1975  
PAGES : 6  
SUBJECTS :  
WATCH LIST  
NSA  
DOCUMENT TYPE : MEMORANDUM  
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified  
RESTRICTIONS : 1C  
CURRENT STATUS : Redact  
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 06/26/2000  
OPENING CRITERIA :  
COMMENTS :

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM  
IDENTIFICATION FORM

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CLASSIFICATION : UNCLASSIFIED  
RESTRICTIONS : REFERRED  
CURRENT STATUS : POSTPONED IN FULL  
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 01/19/99  
OPENING CRITERIA :  
COMMENTS :

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[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED

INTERVIEW WITH: Mrs. Juanita Moody  
 DATE/TIME/PLACE: September 9, 1975, 9:30 a.m., NSA  
 PRESENT: Eric Richard, Peter Fenn  
 RE: NSA Monitoring

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REVIEWED:

BY

BY

Background

Moody began SIGINT work on April 20, 1943, when she was with the Second Signal Service Battalion. She began as a clerk and later, during World War II worked as a cryptanalyst. She then worked for the Army Security Agency, and later, the Armed Forces Security Agency, which is the forerunner of the National Security Agency. Prior to 1961, Moody worked in the Soviet area and analyzed SIGINT traffic. In July 1961, she became the head of G Group which was the NSA section responsible for non-Communist countries. In 1966, she became head of P Group, which included the Information and Reporting element, Customer Relations, the Command Center, the Library, and the Central Reference service. In 1973, she became head of V Group, which included the responsibilities of P Group, as well as research and engineering, requirements, reporting, and the NSOC (National SIGINT Operations Center).

Watch List

Moody explained that the term "watch list" was somewhat of a misnomer because it changed in meaning over the years. She said the first time that she ever heard the term "watch list" was in 1961, and it was in relation to looking for names of people, reports of meetings, or some other kind of activity. She recalls, in the early 1960s, the names of subversives and agents, particularly Soviet, that CIA had sent to NSA. She has no recollection of any U.S. citizens being on the watch list in the early 1960s. In fact, she says that at that time, she was working on the military aspect of the Cuban problem, and did not keep close track of individuals on the watch list.

The period during which Moody has the clearest memory of change in the way the watch list was conducted was in 1963. The assassination of John Kennedy provided the impetus for the Secret Service's inclusion of American citizens who posed threats to the lives of prominent Government officials. She recalls meeting with other agencies during the time the Warren Commission was putting together its report, particularly with CIA and the FBI. She stated that these early meetings were somewhat confusing in that no one in the intelligence community seemed to understand exactly what NSA did. She recommended that P-2, or Customer Relations, be established to promote better contact with the other agencies; this was done to provide direct support to agencies, like the Secret Service and the White House.

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The Director and Deputy Director were aware of the early watch list activity. Moody stated that because the material was so sensitive, and the officers in the Agency were concerned for the "perishable nature" of the SIGINT product, the Director and Deputy Director took a major role in the activity. When names of American citizens were put on the watch list, Moody is sure that the Director and Deputy Director did know of this activity. As for the General Counsel, Moody was not sure about his knowledge.

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Moody has no personal recollection of names coming in from the Office of Security. She stated that she interfaced mostly with the other agency users and would not have had responsibility for communications with the Office of Security.

Asked about the submission of names by telephone, Moody stated that this may have happened before the formalization of the procedure in 1969; after 1969, any name coming in by telephone would have to be followed by written authorization from the requesting agency.

The Yarborough cable of October 1967 signaled the first time that U.S. citizens and groups associated with black and antiwar movements were expressly put on the watch list. She does recall the Yarborough cable coming in on a weekend and the reply from General Carter the next week.

At the time the cable came in, Moody discussed it with a Colonel William Hamilton. Hamilton questioned the legality and propriety of the task requested by Yarborough. Moody and Hamilton then decided not to implement the request until the Director approved it, which he did before authorizing a reply.

Moody recognized her initials on the Carter response and the date of June 19, 1969. She could not recall why she initialed that document at that late date, although it may have related to the MINARET charter, which was written in July 1969. Moody cannot recall any meetings or discussions with anybody in the Defense Department, CIA, or FBI about the Yarborough cable. In fact, she said she never talked to Yarborough about anything. She was under the impression, however, that there was a Presidential order to the Secretary of Defense to keep track of civil disturbances, and the Secretary of Defense had tasked the Army to do that monitoring.

The Carter response to the Yarborough cable was familiar to Moody, but she could not recall having any involvement in its production. She noted that [redacted] was listed as the document drafter. (We later spent about five minutes talking with [redacted] [redacted] did state that she was involved in sending out that cable. Burns stated that Carter probably either dictated

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it to her or gave her the essential points that he wanted in the cable, and she then wrote it up. [redacted] stated that she was quite sure that the telegram was sent to Yarborough and to the other individuals on the U.S. Intelligence Board. She cannot recall any meetings or communications during that time between Carter and Yarborough regarding civil disturbances).

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Moody could not recall anything being included on the watch list directly as a result of Yarborough's telegram. She did not know of any names of people or organizations that came along with the Yarborough cable. In addition, she could not recall any specific response other than the Carter memorandum to Yarborough's telegram; she recalled no SIGINT every being supplied. Moody does not recall any meetings within NSA that resulted from the Yarborough cable.

Moody stated that it was during this mid-late 1960s period that NSA began to develop a fairly sophisticated computer capability to do dictionary scans. The initial effort was focused on a pilot project related to [redacted] and probably began in 1962-1963. But, she said that it took many years to develop the capability to the point where the computers could scan a large number of messages.

Moody recalls that names began to come in to the P Group from the FBI, CIA, Secret Service, and possibly from the military services and DIA. She does not recall any names of individuals from the Army ACS(I) or from the State Department, although Ambassador Hoffacker was Chairman of the Terrorism Committee and may have submitted names that related to it. As for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, their submissions did not start coming in until about 1970, and then with assurances from Director Ingersoll that the material would not be used to prosecute drug traffickers. Moody stated that NSA does not have "any law enforcement function." She did concede, however, that NSA could have intercepted communications which could have been used in apprehending drug traffickers. Moody stated emphatically that there were never any names sent from state or local police, and, had there been, NSA would not have accepted them. This would have been a clear law enforcement function.

When asked about the 4-page, roughly-typed document, Moody said that she did not author it, but speculated that there were two people in her office who may have -- [redacted] She recognized the language in it, but could not pinpoint where the list of names and organizations had come from.

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When questioned about project MINARET and the reasons for it, Moody stated that she sensed the sensitivity of the project and was attempting to control access to the perishable SIGINT information. In a sense, she was "protecting the need to know." The charter was probably prepared within her office, but she cannot recall preparing it herself. It was approved by the Director, as were all other materials relating to the watch list. She stated that "Gayler was informed on a day-to-day basis about the watch list activities." She stated that she even took a specially-colored folder containing watch list product to Gayler every day.

In addition, MINARET was discussed with and approved by the Secretary of Defense. Evidently, there was no approval by the White House. The post-MINARET period did not result in any substantive change in NSA's operation with regard to monitoring U.S. dissidents. Moody does not recall any questioning about the legality of the monitoring operation during this period.

Questioned about the scope of the project, Moody stated that all monitoring was a result of a USIB requirement and that it was also in response to another agency's specific request. Moody confirmed that there was a total of 1100 names of U.S. citizens and groups on the watch list; the largest number at any one time totaled about 300. Moody had no recollection of how much product was generated each month, nor how much was disseminated to other agencies. She did say that there was never any great amount of material, and that it was a small portion of their SIGINT effort. In terms of what material was disseminated to which agencies, Moody said that it depended upon their requirement; anything related to foreign connections with domestic activities would be sent to CIA, and the product regarding domestic groups would be sent to FBI. Obviously, if an agency had submitted a name, they would have received the product on that name.

In terms of the value of the product, Moody said that "not much was turned up on foreign influence," but "Secret Service protection was enhanced because of our efforts." She stated that some NSA take was purportedly used to help save Henry Kissinger's life as well as that of Undersecretary Sisco.

Moody was unclear as to when the General Counsel's office first became aware of the watch list, but knew that Lew Tordella informed both the General Counsel at CIA and DoD about the watch list in 1973.

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Moody was asked about the activities during the Huston Plan and IEC periods. She stated that certainly G Group was involved in some of the efforts that related to the Huston Plan; both Buffham and [redacted] from her shop participated in those activities. In fact, she recalls a proposal to change the charter of NSA so that the Agency could target domestic citizens without having to worry about the foreign communications caveat. Moody stated that if NSA were asked to monitor activities of radicals domestically, and the charter was changed, they would "carry out what we were told to do."

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Moody recounted for us the dialogue between Henry Petersen of Justice and [redacted] and Tordella on the legality of the NSA watch list. She said that it was the opinion of the Justice Department that the activities against American citizens should be halted. She stated that this was a confusing period because for awhile they thought all watch list activity was supposed to be stopped, including that directed against foreigners.

Moody recalled that some of the watch list files were destroyed in January 1974 and that she participated in that decision. It was decided that most of their material should probably not be kept for a period of over five years. The destruction of drug files was due to the fact that that effort had ceased in 1973 and NSA saw no need for that material. As for the different attitudes expressed over the watch list material, she attributed that to the post-Watergate atmosphere. She also stated that Tordella may have been talking with the General Counsel about the legality of the drug intercepts.

Asked about the watch list product, Moody stated that most of it was printer traffic and very little was voice. She does remember that the general requirement to look at people involved in civil disturbances was probably sent to the voice intercept stations. But she has no personal knowledge of this, and she would not have tasked them specifically. To her knowledge, most hits were processed, and no individuals or groups were not sent to any particular agency.

In terms of the biographic information included in the footnotes, Moody said that most of it came from internal sources; C-5 and some from CIA. She does not recall ever calling, or knowing of anybody calling the FBI to get information to put on a piece of watch list product.

Moody was asked about the memorandum that she sent out in May 1970 which instructed all agencies to reaffirm their interest in the watch list product. The

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primary reason for that memorandum, according to Moody, was that she was instructed to keep records on who gets what. Also, the "customer wanting everything" attitude is a continual problem at NSA, according to Moody.

Both the Director and Deputy Director knew about sending out that memorandum. She did recall that there may have been a question at the time of the possible importance of the product, but doubted that there was questioning of the legality of the activity in 1970.

Finally, Moody stressed that the highest levels of NSA were informed at all times about the watch list activity; she expressly stated that the perishable nature of SIGINT information caused them to be particularly attentive. There was a specific concern for any divulging of the SIGINT source.

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