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NAVY DEPARTMENT

UNCLASSIFIED

Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

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Serial No. 0497716

WASHINGTON

Regrade to ..... March 5, 1942.

Auth: E012958

Date: 21 SEP 98 Unit: NCES 22

From: The Director of Naval Intelligence.  
To: All District Intelligence Officers,  
(except Sixteenth Naval District).  
  
SUBJECT: Reports - preparation of,  
  
Reference: (a) DNI conf. ltr. DIO's A6-1/Teletype, Serial  
070316, dated Feb. 4, 1942.

1. The elimination of duplication of effort and the avoidance of delays and misunderstandings which militate against prompt and effective action on matters of naval interest, are urgent war-time requirements. Clear, concise, and comprehensive reporting by District Intelligence Officers contributes to the attainment of those objectives and minimizes the traffic burden on the naval communication service.

2. In the case of a number of reports from District Intelligence Officers, the incompleteness of the reports or the manner in which they were transmitted made it difficult or impossible for the Office of Naval Intelligence to take prompt and effective action on the matters reported. The major defects in these reports were as follows:

(a) Failure to indicate the action taken in the naval district on the matter reported;

(b) Failure to follow up original reports by subsequently reporting the results of action taken on the matter. (Lack of such information makes it impossible for the Office of Naval Intelligence to determine when a case should be closed or whether the original evaluation of a matter reported should be considered as unchanged).

(c) Failure to indicate the time and place of the occurrence reported;

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(d) Failure to indicate the distribution which had been given to the information (whether it had been forwarded to the Sea Frontier Commander, to other naval districts which might logically be interested in it, to the Army, or to other destinations);

(e) Failure to indicate, in messages which did not contain information that might logically be expected, that such information was not obtainable;

(f) Transmittal by ONI teletype of matter which, in accordance with the policy expressed in reference (a), should have been reported by dispatch.

3. The following reports are cited to illustrate some of these defects in reporting:

(a) A boarding report from a District Intelligence Office reported the sighting, by a merchant ship, of a suspicious vessel standing by a submarine in the waters of another naval district. While the position of the sighting was given, the time of the occurrence was not indicated. In the same report, reference was made to the sighting of an uncharted buoy in the waters of the other naval district. There was no indication in the report that the information had been referred for appropriate investigation to the other naval district.

Failure to indicate in the report the time of the sighting of the suspicious vessel made it impossible for ONI to take effective action in the matter. Failure to indicate whether the information reported had been forwarded to the other naval district made it necessary for ONI to forward the information to that district, even though such action may have duplicated action taken by the office which originated the report.

(b) Another District Intelligence Office reported by ONI teletype that a foreign tanker laden with fuel oil and enroute from a southern port to Spain, was supposed to be off the coast of the naval district. The vessel in question had been under suspicion. The teletype further stated: "DUE TO SUBMARINE ACTIVITIES . . . . . PRESENCE THIS SHIP THAT AREA WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE SURVEILLANCE WHILE IN AREA DESIRABLE."



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As the teletype message neither stated that adequate facilities for conducting the surveillance indicated were not available in the district, nor stated that the district Commandant had instigated the surveillance, it was necessary for ONI to request, by teletype, information as to the action which was being taken on the matter in the district. The delay involved would have been obviated if the original teletype had contained such information.

(c) A DIO teletype message forwarded a report from the Army that a sound-detecting device had indicated a number of unidentified vessels four miles off the coast and headed for the coast. The teletype further reported that prowlers had been discovered near the detecting equipment and that one prowler had been shot by an Army sentry when he failed to heed a challenge. The teletype did not indicate the time when the presence of the vessels was discovered - which was subsequently learned to have been two hours before the teletype was dispatched to ONI - nor did it indicate what action was being taken on the matter in the district or the dissemination which had been given to the information. Consequently, it was necessary for ONI to inquire concerning the distribution of the information and action which was being taken on the matter.

A replying teletype from the DIO reported the distribution given to the information and stated that the original report of prowlers had been erroneous. It further reported that the vessels in question were supposed to have been fishing vessels.

4. In addition to the defects in reporting revealed in the above cases, it should be noted that the policy clearly stated in reference (a), indicated that the messages referred to in 3 (b) and (c) should have been forwarded by dispatch rather than by ONI teletype.

5. The above is being disseminated in the hope that the illustrations used will be of assistance in pointing out pitfalls to be avoided.

/s/ J. B. W. WALLER  
By direction

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