

Agency Information

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TO : SCOWCROFT, BRENT

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OPERATION MONGOOSE

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C-3--Some covert operations using the mail may have been designed to represent that the item was originally mailed in a denied area. In other words, you want the recipient to believe that his letter came from the Chinese Communists so you make it appear as if it had been mailed from China. Note that the last item in this group (17 and 10 January 1972) refers to "letter-insert mechanisms." I can find no elaboration of what this means, but it might represent intercept of the mail, surreptitious opening of a letter and the insert of some additional material.

C-4--National Intelligence Estimates and other reports of intelligence may refer to information, some part of which was gleaned from mail intercepts. On the basis of protecting sources and methods these would not normally be identified in a document. However if the question were asked at a meeting, the source might be orally identified as a mail intercept (or SIGINT or whatever).

C-5--This category represents probable entry into the international mail system to support a covert operation. The first item shows DOD sending letters ostensibly from groups in North Vietnam to other countries. The second shows CIA fabricating and mailing 700 letters "ostensibly from Peking." The third shows CIA fabricating Democratic Republic of Vietnam greeting cards and mailing them.

In each of the C-5 cases, operational information was probably gleaned from a mail intercept operation which would enable one to fabricate the paper, envelopes, writing and addressing styles, even counterfeit postage stamps and cachets, all with the aim of giving the appearance that the letter originated from a denied area. The material might then be inserted into the international mail system (e.g., you know that mail from Communist China transits Panama for onward distribution to Latin America; through liaison or independent contacts you insert your bundles in the sack from Peking and then it is given routine onward distribution through the regular mail system).

C-6--Here are two cases where the Committee was informed that mail intercepts were the source of information used in support of covert operations.

With regard to MONGOOSE files--which Mrs. Davis said Justice also wanted us to check--I find only the references at TAB D which suggest the possibility that mail intercept operations were a part of the response to intense pressures for more "hard" information on what was going on in Cuba.

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