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7/15/87
DRAFT: TO BE COORDINATED BY
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SECRET

PRESIDENT'S INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Personnel Security Policy

Personnel security policy is the subject of Cabinet Directive 35 of 1963. That document is out of date and in need of revision to take into account enactment of privacy and access to information legislation as well as the creation of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). ✓

The security classification system for information and material assets, as well as the personnel security screening system, have therefore been the subject of a fundamental review which has concluded that current policies are out of date and subject to both misuse and abuse.

The policy review and development has been centred on the Department of the Solicitor General, with input from the Security Advisory Committee and the Interdepartmental Committee on Security and Intelligence. We are represented on the former and I am a member of the latter. The review will culminate shortly in a Memorandum to Cabinet from the Solicitor General dealing with both the protection of assets and the security policies affecting personnel.

Some important steps towards a new security policy have been taken: the role of the CSIS in security screening and establishment of a review mechanism for security clearance complaints were dealt with through passage of the CSIS Act. Other changes will be needed if the Memorandum to Cabinet is approved. With respect to personnel security policy, Treasury Board would need to translate the new policy guidelines into a succinct policy for the guidance of deputy heads who would have the ultimate responsibility for implementing the policy.

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The essential thrust of the policy recommendations, if approved, would be to maintain the current security classifications of Top Secret, Secret, and Confidential but to tie those classifications much more closely to a more precisely and narrowly defined "national interest". One objective would be to reduce both the amount of classified material and the number of public servants requiring security clearances. In addition to the security considerations, there is a need to review and augment those personnel policies and procedures designed to establish or verify the essential trustworthiness and suitability of both new and serving public servants. These policies and procedures, reinforced by augmented departmental codes of conduct, will provide the essential protection for the substantial range of information and assets which are not related to the national interest but which are nonetheless extremely important. Close co-operation with the PSC will be necessary to ensure that the necessary policies and procedures are in place and are effective, and that public servants are aware of, and respect, the obligations and responsibilities of their positions. ✓

To ensure that there is no protracted delay in issuing guidelines to departments and agencies under the Board's direct authority, I am establishing Task Forces on Personnel Security and Protection of Assets, which are being asked to produce interim security guidelines within 90 days of Cabinet approval of the policy. Once such guidelines are developed, we would have to ensure that they were implemented by all agencies and corporations of government, not just departments of the Public Service.

J.L. Manion

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