

January 12, 1982

Protection of Classified National Security Council
and Intelligence Information

Unauthorized disclosure of classified information under the jurisdiction of the National Security Council and of classified intelligence reports is a problem of major proportions within the U.S. Government. The Constitution of the United States provides for the protection of individual rights and liberties, including freedom of speech and freedom of the press, but it also requires that government functions be discharged efficiently and effectively, especially where the national security is involved. As President of the United States, I am responsible for honoring both Constitutional requirements, and I intend to do so in a balanced and careful manner. I do not believe, however, that the Constitution entitles government employees, entrusted with confidential information critical to the functioning and effectiveness of the Government, to disclose such information with impunity. Yet this is precisely the situation we have. It must not be allowed to continue.

To this end, I hereby establish and direct implementation of the following policies.

Contacts with the Media

All contacts with any element of the news media in which classified National Security Council matters or classified intelligence information are discussed will require the advance approval of a senior official. An administrative memorandum will be prepared as soon as possible after the contact, recording the subjects discussed and all information provided to the media representatives.

Access

The unauthorized disclosure of classified National Security Council information, documents, and deliberations requires further control to limit access and to ensure an accurate record of those who have had access. The number of officials with access to documents relating to NSC matters will be kept to the minimum essential to the orderly conduct of the government's business.

National Security Council Information

National Security Council Information means classified information contained in: (1) any document prepared by or intended primarily for use by the NSC, its interagency groups as defined in NSDD-2, or its associated committees and groups, and (2) deliberations of the NSC, its interagency groups as defined in NSDD-2, or its associated committees and groups.

Access

Any agency or department handling NSC Information will hold the number of persons having access to such information to the absolute minimum consistent with efficient operations of the NSC system, and will strictly control document dissemination and reproduction to carry out existing law. A numbered cover sheet bearing the notation appearing below will be affixed to each copy of a document containing NSC Information. The cover sheet will be attached at the time it is submitted to an Assistant Secretary or equivalent level. The NSC will provide sample cover sheets to departments and agencies who will then be responsible for further distribution and administration.

NOTICE

The attached document contains classified National Security Council Information. It is to be read and discussed only by persons authorized by law.

Your signature acknowledges you are such a person and you promise you will show or discuss information contained in the document only with persons who are authorized by law to have access to this document.

Persons handling this document acknowledge he or she knows and understands the security law relating thereto and will cooperate fully with any lawful investigation by the United States Government into any unauthorized disclosure of classified information contained herein.

Implementation

Agency and department heads will forward to the NSC implementing instructions on these procedures no later than March 15, 1982.

Investigations

The government's lack of success in identifying the sources of unauthorized disclosure of classified National Security Council information and documents of classified intelligence information must be remedied and appropriate disciplinary measures taken. Henceforth, in the event of unauthorized disclosure of such information, government employees who have had access to that information will be subject to investigation, to include the use of all legal methods.

Applicability and Implementation

The provisions of this directive shall be effective immediately and shall apply to all employees of, and elements within, agencies participating in the National Security Council system, including the Executive Office of the President. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs is directed to establish the detailed procedures to implement policies.