TOP SECRET

ORDER OF THE PEOPLE’S COMMISSAR OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE USSR

for 1940.

№ 0017. Contents: on procedures for the top-secret monitoring of postal and telegraphic correspondence.

№ 0017. 4 January 1940 Moscow

I hereby declare, to be unswervingly guided by and implemented, these “Instructions on Procedures for the Top-Secret Monitoring of Postal and Telegraphic Correspondence,” approved by decree of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR.

All previously issued orders and instructions on procedures for the top-secret monitoring of postal and telegraphic correspondence are rescinded.

This order is to be sent only to People’s Commissars of the NKVD, UNKVD directors, and directors of Second Special Departments and Divisions.

DEPUTY PEOPLE’S COMMISSAR OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE USSR

В. MERKULOV.

TRUE COPY: Deputy operations officer of the Codification Department of the Secretariat of the NKVD of the USSR – Sergeant of State Security [signature].

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Approved by decree of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR

(statement № SO-10414 of 9 December 1939)

Top secret.

On the same basis as encrypted.

INSTRUCTIONS

on Procedures for the Top-Secret Monitoring of Postal and Telegraphic Correspondence.

1. In order to protect the state interests of the USSR, monitoring of postal and telegraphic correspondence is to be organized.

The top-secret monitoring of postal and telegraphic correspondence is to be carried out by the Second Special Department of the NKVD of the USSR and its local agencies, for the purpose of:

a) disclosing the nature of correspondence and connections of objects monitored per instruction of senior officials of the People’s Commissariats and Directorates of the NKVD;

b) detecting counterrevolutionary, espionage-related, provocative, and other criminal correspondence, both overt and covert (encrypted, encoded, ciphered, etc.);

c) preventing the dissemination of counterrevolutionary literature in all its forms;

d) preventing the disclosure of military and state secrets in postal correspondence;

e) protecting the foreign-trade monopoly and currency system of the USSR from the importation into the USSR and exportation from it of contraband goods and of foreign and Soviet currency.

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2. The right to monitor all postal and telegraphic international and domestic correspondence, as well as international and domestic parcels, belongs exclusively to the Second Special Department of the NKVD and its peripheral agencies (Second Special Departments and Divisions) and their sites, in accordance with the locations authorized for same.

3. The correspondence of all members of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), members of the Party Control Commission, and members of the Central Committees of the National Communist Parties of union republics, is not subject to any monitoring.

NOTE: Monitoring the correspondence of members of the Supreme Council of the USSR, the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR and union republics, People’s Commissars of the USSR and union republics and their deputies, members of the Presidium of the VTsSPS, and heads of regional and territorial directorates of the NKVD, is permitted with the authorization of the People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR.

4. In order to keep the existence of monitoring sites and the operations thereof secret, the following conditions must be organized:

Monitoring activity is to be carried out only in completely isolated premises of post offices and postal and telegraph offices and branches provided by the People’s Commissariat of Communications. These premises are to be kept secret from unauthorized persons, first and foremost, from staff members of the People’s Commissariat of Communications (those not involved in the sites’ activities), under the guise of classified, financial, and other such dispatch departments at major post offices, and at smaller bureaus and branches, in accordance with local conditions.

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5. The People’s Commissariat of Communications is to ensure the direct delivery of correspondence to “PK” monitoring sites, bypassing all dispatch departments.

6. All postal representatives involved in the delivery of correspondence to monitoring sites and the dispatch of correspondence therefrom are to be subjected to special vetting, and bound by the nondisclosure pledge.

7. Persons guilty of disclosing the existence of monitoring sites and/or their methods of operation are to be criminally prosecuted.

8. International correspondence is to be subjected to mandatory vetting for the purpose of detecting counterrevolutionary literature, currency, and contraband.

9. Documents subject to confiscation:

а) those of a counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet, defamatory nature (leaflets; proclamations; clippings from White Guard newspapers; documents spreading provocative rumours, and so on);

b) religious propaganda;

c) documents being mailed abroad that contain various forms of identification papers and certificates, as well as seals and forms;

d) documents being mailed abroad that contain large sums of money in either foreign or Soviet currencies, or bonds; and documents mailed from abroad that include Soviet currency and contraband.

10. International parcels are to be inspected in full. The inspection is to be conducted on the following grounds:

а) All incoming and outgoing parcels are to be inspected for the purpose of seizing counterrevolutionary literature, leaflets, proclamations, newspaper clippings, caricatures, and other counterrevolutionary materials, as well as detecting enciphered writing;

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b) Transit parcels shipped in bulk and sorted that contain literature in foreign languages, regardless of content, are to be let through. Registered transit parcels containing White Guard literature are also to be let through. Regular transit parcels containing counterrevolutionary proclamations, leaflets, newspapers, and so on are to be confiscated;

c) Parcels containing items of clothing are to be withheld and forwarded via postal representative to agencies of the Customs Directorate of the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Trade;

d) Manuscripts mailed abroad from the USSR without special permission by Glavlit for each particular case are not permitted.

11. General technical instructions on the purposes and structure of the “PK” sites, and their methods and techniques of processing correspondence, are to be approved by the People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR.

12. In wartime, military censorship is to be enforced. The location of military censorship sites is determined according to the territorial agencies of the NKVD. Regulations on military censorship in army units are to be developed jointly by the NKVD and the People’s Commissariat of Defense.

DIRECTOR OF THE 2nd SPECIAL DEPARMENT OF THE NKVD OF THE USSR,

MAJOR OF STATE SECURITY LAPSHIN.

DIRECTOR OF THE 3rd DIVISION OF THE 2nd SPECIAL DEPARTMENT,

LIEUTENANT OF STATE SECURITY MAKAROV.

TRUE COPY: Deputy operations officer of the Codification Department of the Secretariat of the NKVD of the USSR – Sergeant of State Security [signature]

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