TOP SECRET

**ORDER**

OF THE PEOPLE’S COMMISSAR OF STATE SECURITY OF THE USSR

for 1946

№ **0020. Contents:** Announcing the “Instructions on Procedures for the Covert Inspection (“PK”) of International Postal and Telegraphic Correspondence.”

**№ 0020** 14 January 1946 Moscow

Hereby announced, for the purposes of guidance, are the “Instructions on Procedures for the Covert Inspection (“PK”) of International Postal and Telegraphic Correspondence.”

This order is to be distributed to relevant parties.

People’s Commissar of State Security of the USSR

Army General **V.MERKULOV**

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**TOP SECRET**

**On the same basis as encrypted**

“APPROVED”

People’s Commissar of State Security of the USSR

Army General **V. MERKULOV**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**on Procedures for the Covert Inspection (“PK”) of International Postal and Telegraphic Correspondence**

1. Pursuant to NKGB USSR Order № 00466 of 22 November 1945, international postal and telegraphic correspondence of the population of the USSR is to be covertly monitored in its entirety.

All incoming and outgoing regular, registered, and insured letters, telegrams, radiograms, parcels, and other types of postal and telegraphic communications of both individuals and institutions are subject to inspection.

International packages **entering** the USSR are to be inspected selectively; those mailed abroad **from** the USSR—in their entirety.

2. International postal and telegraphic correspondence is to be inspected only at special sites for the monitoring of international correspondence at the following locations established by the NKGB of the USSR: the 3rd Division of the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR, in Moscow; the “V” departments of the NKGB of the Armenian SSR, NKGB of the Azerbaijan SSR, NKGB of the Georgian SSR, NKGB of the Ukrainian SSR (in the cities of Kyiv, Odessa, Lviv, Uzhhorod), NKGB of the Belarusian SSR, NKGB of the Lithuanian SSR, NKGB of the Latvian SSR, NKGB of the Estonian SSR, NKGB of the Kazakh SSR, NKGB of the Uzbek SSR, NKGB of the Turkmen SSR, NKGB of the Moldovan SSR, NKGB of the Buryat-Mongol ASSR, UNKGB of the Leningrad Region, UNKGB of the Chita Region, UNKGB of the Primorsky Territory, UNKGB of the Murmansk Region, and UNKGB of the Arkhangelsk Region.

International mail monitoring sites are to serve certain zones, to be established by the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR in coordination with the International Directorate of the People’s Commissariat of Communications of the USSR.

Organizing new international mail monitoring sites, or closing existing ones, may be done only with the authorization of the NKGB of the USSR.

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3. International mail from other countries **in transit** through the USSR is to be covertly inspected only in Moscow by the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR.

4. Parcels **entering** the USSR from abroad are to be inspected only in Moscow by the 3rd Division of the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR. Parcels mailed abroad **from** the USSR are to be inspected at the territorially appropriate international mail monitoring site.

5. “V” departments of the NKGB of the union and autonomous republics and of the UNKGB of the territories and regions listed in paragraph 2 shall establish, for the covert monitoring of international postal and telegraphic correspondence, divisions or special groups, which are charged with:

a) screening international postal and telegraphic correspondence as assigned by operational directorates and departments of the NKGB and NKVD, as well as the “Smersh” Counterintelligence Units of the NKO and NKVMF;

b) inspecting all incoming and outgoing international letters and telegrams, and inspecting parcels mailed abroad from the USSR;

c) monitoring all outgoing international packages, and selectively monitoring incoming ones;

d) keeping operational records on persons maintaining written communications with foreign countries.

6. In Moscow, the monitoring of international correspondence is to be carried out by the 3rd division the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR, which is charged with:

a) inspecting all international postal and telegraphic correspondence passing through communications enterprises assigned to the Main Moscow Post Office as the central place of international exchange of the USSR;

b) screening international correspondence as assigned by operational directorates and departments of the NKGB of the USSR, the UNKGB of the Moscow Region, the NKVD of the USSR, and the “Smersh” Counterintelligence Units of the NKO and NKVMF;

c) keeping records on persons located in Moscow and the Moscow region who maintain written communications with foreign countries;

d) monitoring and overseeing the operation of all peripheral international mail monitoring sites.

In accordance with these functions, the 3rd Division of the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR is to establish the following groups:

1) a group to inspect postal correspondence;

2) a group to inspect telegraphic correspondence;

3) a group to inspect parcels and packages;

4) a group to select documents, per assignments;

5) an operational recordkeeping group;

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6) a monitoring and inspection group (to check the work of peripheral sites).

Technical processing of international correspondence (unsealing, resealing, chemical control) in Moscow is entrusted to the 5th Division of the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR (the special equipment division).

7. Operational recordkeeping on persons in written communication with foreign countries and the monitoring of their correspondence is to be carried out by all “V” departments (divisions) of the NKGB-UNKGB in accordance with NKGB USSR instruction № 59 of 13 May 1944 and № 78 of 1 July 1944.

8. “V” departments and divisions of the NKGB-UNKGB must systematically ensure that international postal and telegraphic dispatches pass through the requisite monitoring sites, and do not bypass them.

To this end, by arrangement with agencies of the People’s Commissariat of Communications, the postmarking of international correspondence must be removed from the competency of international dispatch sections of post offices and transferred to that of international mail monitoring groups.

After being inspected, international correspondence is to be postmarked with dates using special prearranged (letter) designations.

9. The unsealing and resealing of international letters should be carried out by specialized groups or by specially detailed personnel most qualified in this field.

**It is essential for the monitoring of international correspondence that the technical processing of documents be carried out with the greatest thoroughness and absolute scrupulousness**.

International letters may be dispatched to addressees only after checking the quality of each particular letter’s unsealing and resealing.

Personally charged with checking this are directors of international mail monitoring divisions (groups), and, at major [monitoring] sites, technical monitors.

10. All international postal correspondence is to be checked for the presence of secret writing, using methods that leave no visible trace.

Certain types of correspondence, the most important in operational terms (correspondence with states engaged in active intelligence against the USSR; correspondence of persons designated for special monitoring; etc.), are to be additionally processed on a selective basis; these are to be:

a) examined in reflected light, so as to detect possible micro-photo miniatures, secretly embossed texts, etc.

b) inspected using techniques recommended by the “Instructions for the Detailed Examination of Correspondence for Secret Writing.”

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If there is substantial cause to suspect the presence of secret writing, documents are to be subjected to individual chemical processing.

Members of the international mail reading group are obliged to select screen documents suspected of containing secret writing (due to wide line spacing, dashes under the text, blank sheets of paper and envelopes, semantic hints in the text, etc.) and pass them on via the group director (senior official) for additional chemical processing.

11. Parcels are to be inspected on the following basis:

a) All incoming and outgoing parcels are to be inspected so as to detect and seize any anti-Soviet literature, leaflets, proclamations, newspaper clippings, caricatures, etc.

Parcels addressed to private persons should be inspected as thoroughly as possible, with particular attention paid to detecting potential secret writing, micro-photos, various inserts and paste-ins, etc.;

b) all literature, with the exception of anti-Soviet literature subject to confiscation, is to be turned over, after its covert examination, to the Glavlit authorities;

c) anti-Soviet literature is to be permitted to proceed to addressees only accordingly to special lists of the Glavlit of the USSR;

d) in accordance with postal regulations, parcels being mailed abroad that contain manuscripts (articles on various issues, artistic works, etc.) must have special permission from Glavlit. In the absence thereof, parcels are to be returned through the post office to their senders, and in the absence of return addresses, they are to be turned over to the Glavlit authorities on the same basis;

e) **registered** transit parcels, sorted with parcels entering or leaving the Soviet Union, are to be permitted to proceed to their address regardless of content.

Sorted **regular** transit parcels containing anti-Soviet literature are to be confiscated;

f) parcels containing items of clothing are to be detained and forwarded via postal personnel to customs agencies of the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Trade;

g) incoming and outgoing international parcels are to be examined by untying the parcels or making an incision in them, but in such a way as to not damage items enclosed.

12) International mail monitoring divisions and groups are to monitor all outgoing international packages and selectively inspect incoming international ones, both as instructed by operational departments and on the initiative of “V” departments of the NKGB-UNKGB with the authorization of people’s commissars of state security

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of union and autonomous republics, territorial and regional directors of the UNKGB, and the director of the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR.

International packages are to be inspected simultaneously with their customs screening. Special attention should be paid to detecting and seizing printed publications and manuscripts, letters, and other documents that are not to be sent in packages.

13. The following kinds of documents are subject to confiscation:

a) those containing anti-Soviet, provocative/slanderous, panic-mongering, espionage-related, and other messages directed against the state interests of the Soviet Union;

b) various anti-Soviet documents and publications (leaflets, pamphlets, caricatures, etc.);

c) documents and publications of religious propaganda, except for officially permitted ones, as well as letters sent from abroad to private individuals containing brochures, magazines, or leaflets of religious content, religious items, etc. (permission to proceed to their address is to be coordinated in each particular case with the respective 2nd departments and directorates of the NKGB-UNKGB);

d) documents that disclose state and military secrets, or contain reports on operational activities of the NKVD, NKGB, or the “Smersh” Counterintelligence Units of the NKO and NKVMF, or on arrests of groups or individuals;

e) pornographic documents, postcards, or photographs;

f) all letters and telegrams sent abroad by persons located in places of detention, special camps, and administrative exile, regardless of the nature of the messages;

g) incoming and outgoing letters and telegrams informing of the addresses of persons located in places of detention, special camps, and administrative exile in the USSR;

h) incoming and outgoing letters and telegrams informing of the fate of persons arrested or purged by the Soviet authorities, or requesting assistance in the release of such persons;

i) letters and telegrams sent from the USSR reporting on the resettlement of various population groups or the repatriation of foreign nationals and prisoners of war, with the exception of information published in the Soviet press;

j) letters from Soviet citizens requesting assistance with going abroad and renouncing Soviet citizenship;

k) letters and telegrams sent from the USSR to individuals and organizations containing inquiries about joining

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foreign armies, offering various services or inventions, etc.;

l) letters containing any sort of praise of the capitalist system;

m) letters **going** abroad that contain Soviet or foreign currency or securities, as well as letters **coming from** abroad that contain Soviet currency (foreign currency sent in letters from abroad to the USSR, regardless of amount, is to be allowed through without hindrance);

n) letters going abroad that contain Soviet documents or various kinds of certificates bearing the official stamp of Soviet institutions (passports, party documents, military documents, trade union cards, etc.);

o) postal and telegraphic correspondence with states with which the Soviet Union does not maintain postal and telegraphic exchanges;

p) letters mailed in a slovenly manner—in homemade envelopes made of coarse wrapping paper, etc.

NOTES: 1. Information constituting a military secret includes data on: mobilization plans and measures; the composition, size, and designation of units of the Red Army and the Navy; the location and movement of military units, squadrons, or military or naval vessels; the nature of work on the construction of fortified points, their armament, and garrison size; new forms of weaponry and classified inventions; the staffing of new troop formations; military transportation; the technical condition of railroads, highways, and waterways; the condition of telegraph and telephone lines; the location and power of radio stations; the progress of frontline combat, numbers of killed and wounded, results of bombardments, railway accidents, and planned and ongoing operations; the work of military and defense plants, numbers of workers, plant equipment and location, and the progress of the fulfillment of defense-related orders; the location of military facilities, warehouses, airfields, gas shelters, or fortified points; and epidemic illnesses in the army and the rear.

The “Listing of Information Not To Be Published in the Open Press,” issued by Glavlit USSR, should be used in determining what information constitutes a state secret.

2. Letters from prisoners of war are to be monitored by the camp censorship of the NKVD, and are to be sent abroad only if stamped as approved.

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International mail monitoring sites may, on a selective basis, conduct a secondary inspection of the correspondence of prisoners of war.

3. Letters from foreign nationals to Soviet citizens (whom they allegedly married while in German captivity) having to do with moving abroad, petitioning for foreign citizenship, etc., are to be permitted to proceed to their address, unless they contain other, politically objectionable content.

Letters from Soviet citizens to said foreign nationals are likewise to be permitted to proceed to their address, unless they contain requests for assistance with renouncing Soviet citizenship or other politically objectionable messages or statements.

4. The correspondence of persons belonging to the so-called “new emigration” (non-returnees; persons who went or were taken abroad during the war and have continued to reside there) is to be thoroughly inspected and designated for special monitoring. The question of whether letters from these persons should be permitted to proceed to their address is to be resolved in accordance with the usual procedure.

14. The letters and communications listed in paragraph 13 may be permitted to proceed to their address only in cases where operational necessity dictates, and only with the authorization of requisite commissars of state security of union and autonomous republics, territorial and regional directors of the UNKGB, and the director of the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR.

15. Incoming and outgoing international letters that contain valuables, or philatelic items of high value, are to be transferred in resealed form to the customs inspection authorities. The transfer of these letters is to be performed via postal employees.

16. Confiscated Soviet and foreign currency and other valuables are to be registered in a special log and turned over to financial departments of the NKGB-UNKGB as ownerless.

17. “V” departments of the NKGB-UNKGB that have international mail monitoring sites are to submit a monthly report to the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR, to include the following information:

1) The number of documents (letters, parcels, packages) screened, with each type of correspondence indicated separately.

2) The number of foreign-language documents screened (for each language separately).

3) The number of documents that underwent “K”.

4) The number of documents selected for operational use.

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5) The number of documents selected for thematic information (with topics indicated).

6) The use of “PK” materials (how many memoranda and documents were sent, and where; how many thematic special communiques were issued, and on what topics, and to whom they were sent).

7) The results of checking for “TS” (how many documents were inspected; how many instances, and what kinds, of “TS” were detected).

8) Quality control (what sort of defects were discovered, who checked for them, and what measures were taken).

9) Staffing data (how many staff members were hired during the past month, how many were dismissed, how many foreign-language translators are available, and for which languages).

The monthly report is to be accompanied by excerpts from the most noteworthy documents selected for operational use or thematic information.

18. On a quarterly basis, results of the operational use of “PK” materials are to be reported to the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR in the following format:

a) the number of persons arrested;

b) the number of individual record cards initiated;

c) the number of persons taken account of in operational records (by operational departments);

d) the number of recruitments performed;

e) the number of persons recorded as being in correspondence with persons abroad;

f) the number of persons designated for special monitoring;

g) the number of surveillance files opened;

h) the number of surveillance files transferred to operational departments.

The quarterly report is to be accompanied by excerpts from the most interesting documents used in determining the activities of operational departments, and by information gained from surveillance files opened by “V” departments of the NKGB-UNKGB.

19. In all other respects, international mail monitoring sites are to be guided by the general “Instructions on the Work of the Political Monitoring (“PK”) Agencies of the NKGB,” announced by NKGB USSR order № 008 for 1946.

Director of the “V” Department of the NKGB of the USSR

Major-General **GRIBOV**