Purkins:

12 July 50

accord new draft
from Coynce.
State
Defense
Justice
Treasury
Budget

1st Draft

Would ultimately have to be connected to Ex. Br.
MEMORANDUM FOR:  MR. JAMES LAY


I am returning the draft copy of "Minimum Standards."

I have made a number of penciled suggestions on the text which I shall be very happy to go over with you, with Pat Coyne, or with anyone else you may designate. I do not think the suggestions will mean much unless I have the opportunity to explain them personally.

I have the following general suggestions:

1. This should be a self-contained document, suitable for distribution as a pamphlet to officials and employees of the Executive Branch. It should not, in my opinion, have references such as the ones appearing on page 13 and page 19, which refer to laws. I think these laws should either be quoted or summarized here, so that this document contains a complete story, and so that the recipient of this does not have to go to a library to find out what this is referring to.

2. I feel very strongly the need for a more precise and clear definition of the four classifications of "Top Secret," "Secret," "Confidential," and "Restricted." If I had to classify a document on the basis of the very scanty information contained in paragraphs 7 through 10, inclusive, of this paper, I should be utterly at a loss as to how to proceed. I recognize that a more precise definition of these classifications is difficult, but this whole subject is difficult, and the
purpose of this paper is to assist the various agencies of
the Executive Branch in achieving uniformity in the handling
and transmission of classified information. I think the
whole purpose of this paper will not be met if the four
classifications are not better defined.

On the assumption that you have informed the
President of the existence of this paper, I have not mentioned
it to him, but I have shown it or described it to Messrs. Murphy,
Springarn, [illegible], Bell, Lloyd and Neustadt. No objection
was raised by any one of these men, and I believe you are free
to proceed as rapidly as possible with the interdepartmental
clearance of this paper.

GEORGE R. EISEY

3. "Final Draft" classification - Indicate that
Security classifications may be used for "drafts".
July 7, 1950

Memorandum for: Mr. Murphy
Mr. Spingarn
Mr. Ball
Mr. Lloyd
Mr. Neustadt

I have received from the National Security Council a draft entitled "Minimum Standards for the Handling and Transmission of Classified Information in the Executive Departments and Agencies of the Federal Government."

This paper has been prepared by an interdepartmental working committee under the supervision of James Lay, at the direction of the President. It is proposed that this paper be circulated throughout the Executive Branch for comments and suggestions before it is put in final form.

Lay has requested informal White House reaction to this paper, as he does not wish to circulate it if the White House should have some strong objections to anything now appearing in the draft.

Since only one copy is available, I shall hold it in my office but I shall be very happy to make it available to any or all of the addressees who might wish to go over it (nineteen pages of complicated language).

Please let me know by Wednesday, July 14, if you are interested; Lay has a meeting scheduled on Thursday, July 15, and would like our reaction before then.

George H. Bliss

Copies sent to: Spingarn, Bell, Lloyd, Neustadt.