

AIRTEL

- 1 - Mr. Herndon
- 1 - Mr. Moore
(Attn: Mr. [redacted])
- 1 - Mr. Cockran (Attn: Mr. [redacted])
1/15/79
- 1 - Mr. [redacted]
- 1 - Mr. [redacted]

To: SAC, San Francisco (89-250)

From: Director, FBI (89-4286)

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This will confirm the telephone conversation of 1/11/79 between Case Agent Don Hale of your office and Laboratory Supervisor [redacted]. During this conversation SA Hale was advised that the Technical Evaluation Unit of the Laboratory Division has in its possession sixty-one five-inch reel-to-reel recording tapes in captioned investigation. These tapes are copies produced by the Engineering Section of the Technical Services Division (TSD) from recordings made by amateur radio operator [redacted] of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. The recordings reflect radio transmissions on amateur radio (ham) frequencies, allegedly between the People's Temple in San Francisco, California, and surrounding area and the contingent located at Jonestown, and Georgetown, Guyana. The original tapes and a copy of each have been returned to the Knoxville Division. Copies have also been provided to San Francisco and the Laboratory (u)

Upon receipt of the tapes in the Laboratory, cryptanalysts monitored them to detect the presence of any encrypted messages or other form of secret communication which could shed light on possible illegal activities of members of the People's Temple. Review of the tapes indicated the strong probability that a code of the "double-meaning" variety was being used. Copies of certain code books which were subsequently recovered in Guyana have now confirmed the presence of coded material in the transmissions. Review of the tapes also revealed that the recordings cover the time period from approximately March 12 to May 11, 1978. (u)

While it is believed unlikely that these tapes, made six months prior to the visit of Congressman Ryan to Guyana,

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RMP:djn*
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could be pertinent to this investigation, the possible existence of valuable information on the tapes can not be precluded. The Laboratory, however, is not in the best position to determine the potential value of the tapes at this point in the investigation. Absent such a determination, it would be unwise to make the huge manpower commitment which would be required in order to make transcripts of the tapes and thereafter decode the encrypted portions. (u)

It is noted that the recordings, aside from their sheer bulk, are of very poor quality. They were taken from very crowded and noisy radio frequencies and contain a great deal of background noise, including static and other amateur operators transmitting on the same frequencies. (u)

For the above reasons, the Laboratory will conduct no further cryptanalytic examinations on the Oak Ridge tapes. In the event San Francisco desires additional work on any of the recordings, the tape(s) and a transcript of the portion to be analyzed along with the code books (not copies) should be submitted, attention: Technical Evaluation Unit. (u)