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CHAPTER 3. ORIGINAL CLASSIFICATION AND MARKING

- 3-1. DEFINITION. "Original Classification" means an initial determination that information requires, in the interest of national security, protection against unauthorized disclosure, together with a classification designation signifying the level of protection required.
- 3-2. CLASSIFICATION LEVELS.
- a. National security information (hereinafter "classified information") shall be classified at one of the following three levels:
- (1) Top Secret. "Top Secret" shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security.
  - (2) Secret. "Secret" shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause serious damage to the national security.
  - (3) Confidential. "Confidential" shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security.
- b. Limitations. Markings other than "Top Secret", "Secret", and "Confidential", such as "For Official Use Only" or "Limited Official Use", shall not be used to identify national security information. No other term or phrase shall be used in conjunction with these markings, such as "Secret Sensitive" or "Agency Confidential", to identify national security information. The terms "Top Secret", "Secret", and "Confidential" should not be used to identify nonclassified executive branch information.
- c. Reasonable Doubt.
- (1) When there is reasonable doubt about the need to classify information, the information shall be safeguarded as if it were "Confidential" information in accordance with Chapter 6, pending the determination about its classification. Upon the determination of a

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need for classification, the information that is classified shall be marked as provided in paragraph 3-5.

- (2) When there is reasonable doubt about the appropriate classification level, the information shall be safeguarded at the higher level in accordance with Chapter 6, pending the determination about its classification level. Upon the determination of its classification level, the information shall be marked as provided in paragraph 3-5.

3-3. CLASSIFICATION CATEGORIES.

- a. Information shall be considered for classification if it concerns:
  - (1) Military plans, weapons, or operations;
  - (2) The vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, projects, or plans relating to the national security;
  - (3) Foreign government information;
  - (4) Intelligence activities (including special activities), or intelligence sources or methods;
  - (5) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States;
  - (6) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to the national security;
  - (7) United States Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities;
  - (8) Cryptology;
  - (9) A confidential source; or
  - (10) Other categories of information that are related to the national security and that require protection against unauthorized disclosure as determined by the President or by agency heads or other officials who have been delegated original classification authority by the

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President. Any determination made under this subsection shall be reported promptly to the Director of the Information Security Oversight Office.

- b. Information that is determined to concern one or more of the categories in paragraph 3-3a shall be classified when an original classification authority also determines that its unauthorized disclosure, either by itself or in the context of other information, reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security.
- c. Unauthorized disclosure of foreign government information, the identity of a confidential foreign source, or intelligence sources or methods is presumed to cause damage to the national security.
- d. Information classified in accordance with paragraph 3-3 shall not be declassified automatically as a result of any unofficial publication or inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure in the United States or abroad of identical or similar information.

3-4. DURATION OF CLASSIFICATION.

- a. Information not Marked for Declassification. Information classified under predecessor orders that is not subject to automatic declassification shall remain classified until reviewed for declassification.
- b. Authority to Extend Automatic Declassification Determinations. The authority to extend the classification of information subject to automatic declassification under predecessor orders is limited to those officials who have classification authority over the information and are designated in writing to have original classification authority at the level of the information to remain classified. Any decision to extend this classification on other than a document-by-document basis shall be reported to the Director of the Information Security Oversight Office.

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- 3-5. IDENTIFICATION AND MARKINGS. A uniform information security system requires that standard markings be applied to national security information. Except in extraordinary circumstances as provided in section 1.5(a) of the Order, or as indicated herein, the marking of paper documents created after the

effective date of the Order shall not deviate from the following prescribed formats. These markings shall also be affixed to material other than paper documents, or the originator shall provide holders or recipients of the information with written instructions for protecting the information.

a. Classification Level. The markings "Top Secret", "Secret", and "Confidential" are used to indicate: that information requires protection as national security information under the Order; the highest level of classification contained in a document; and the classification level of each page and, in abbreviated form, each portion of a document.

(1) Overall Marking. The highest level of classification of information in a document shall be marked in such a way as to distinguish it clearly from the informational text. These markings shall appear at the top and bottom of the outside of the front cover (if any), on the title page (if any), on the first page, and on the outside of the back cover (if any).

(2) Page Marking. Each interior page of a classified document shall be marked at the top and bottom either according to the highest classification of the content of the page, including the designation "Unclassified" when it is applicable, or with the highest overall classification of the document.

(3) Portion Marking. Agency heads may waive the portion marking requirement for specified classes of documents or information only upon a written determination that: (i) there will be minimal circulation of the specified documents or information and minimal potential usage of these documents or information as a source for derivative classification determinations; or (ii) there is some other basis to conclude that the potential benefits of portion marking are clearly outweighed by the increased administrative burdens. Unless the portion marking requirement has been waived as authorized, each portion of a document, including subjects and titles, shall be marked by placing a

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parenthetical designation immediately preceding or following the text to which it applies. The symbols "(TS)" for Top Secret, "(S)" for Secret, "(C)" for Confidential, and "(U)" for Unclassified shall be used for this purpose. If the application of parenthetical

designations is not practicable, the document shall contain a statement sufficient to identify the information that is classified and the level of such classification, and the information that is not classified. If all portions of a document are classified at the same level, this fact may be indicated by a statement to that effect. If a subject or title requires classification, an unclassified identifier may be applied to facilitate reference.

- b. Classification Authority. If the original classifier is other than the signer or approver of the document, the identity shall be shown as follows:

"CLASSIFIED BY (identification of original classification authority)"

- c. Agency and Office of Origin. If the identity of the originating agency and office is not apparent on the face of a document, it shall be placed below the "CLASSIFIED BY" line.

- d. Declassification and Downgrading Instructions. Declassification and, as applicable, downgrading instructions shall be shown as follows:

- (1) For information to be declassified automatically on a specific date:

"DECLASSIFY ON: (date)"

- (2) For information to be declassified automatically upon occurrence of a specific event:

"DECLASSIFY ON: (description of event)"

- (3) For information not to be declassified automatically:

"DECLASSIFY ON: ORIGINATING AGENCY'S DETERMINATION REQUIRED or 'OADR'"

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- (4) For information to be downgraded automatically on a specific date or upon occurrence of a specific event:

"DOWNGRADE TO (classification level)  
ON (date or description of event)"

- e. Special Markings.

(1) Transmittal documents. A transmittal document shall indicate on its face the highest classification of any information transmitted by it. It shall also include the following or similar instruction:

(a) For an unclassified transmittal document:

"UNCLASSIFIED WHEN CLASSIFIED  
ENCLOSURE IS REMOVED"

(b) For a classified transmittal document:

"UPON REMOVAL OF ATTACHMENTS THIS  
DOCUMENT IS (classification level of the  
transmittal document standing alone)"

(2) "Restricted Data" and "Formerly Restricted Data" shall be marked in accordance with regulations issued under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

(3) Intelligence sources or methods. Documents that contain information relating to intelligence sources or methods shall include the following marking unless otherwise proscribed by the Director of Central Intelligence:

"WARNING NOTICE-- INTELLIGENCE  
SOURCES OR METHODS INVOLVED"

(4) Foreign government information. Documents that contain foreign government information shall include either the marking "FOREIGN GOVERNMENT INFORMATION", or a marking that otherwise indicates that the information is foreign government information. If the fact that information is foreign government information must be concealed, the marking shall not be used and the document shall be marked as if it were wholly of U.S. origin.