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Memorandum For the Record

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From:

Subject: Senate Hearing on Viruses

Date: 25 May 1989

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1. On 15 May 1989, of OS/ISG/S&TD/ISTAC attended a Technology & Law Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on computer viruses. (U)

2. The first to give testimony was William Sessions, Director of the FBI. He stated that the FBI had investigated two cases on computer viruses. One was the case of the hacker *Shadow Hawk* and the other affected a government computer and he could not discuss it. (U)

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3. Director Sessions stated that the FBI knew how to gather evidence on computer crimes and had the technical expertise to evaluate it, but that the current laws did not address the problems of malicious software and were incomplete. (U)

4. Two other officials from the FBI answered questions from Senator Leahy (Chmn, D-Vt) reinforcing the FBI's position. (U)

5. The final person to give testimony was Cliff Stoll, who discovered the Hanover Hacker and investigated it on his own. He testified that non-government computer networks are not very secure from malicious attacks. He didn't know anything about classified government networks, but postulated that they had the same vulnerabilities and that they probably weren't as widely connected. The utility of these non-classified networks are to allow anyone to communicate with others. Security tends to get in the way of utility. He also stated that there's no known way to completely protect computer systems from these types of attacks. (U)

6. Senator Leahy was well prepared on the subject and very supportive of the testimonies given. His main concern was to find a balance between protecting computers from malicious attacks and not stifling creativity in young programmers.

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