

March 18, 1942

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt  
President of the United States  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

As you are doubtless well aware, one of the most necessary materials in the defense of a nation is a system of communication which can be used without danger of being interpreted and understood by enemies who may intercept it. During the 1914-18 war I understand that most of the surprise attacks from either side failed to be any surprise at all because the other side had intercepted the messages giving the orders and had been able to decipher them. All methods of sending messages secretly which have been used up to date are worked out on a few definite principles. These principles are thoroughly understood and in most cases messages using them are quite easily deciphered.

An entirely new principle never before used would mean far more to a nation at war than would several additional battleships. For use of the army, of the navy, of aeroplanes, and especially of the diplomatic corps, its advantages are incalculable.

I have discovered an entirely new principle for sending messages, which has never yet been used and could not possibly be deciphered by one unfamiliar with it. Even if the principle should become known to an enemy as the result of treachery, there is still an infinite variety of possibilities for its application, making decipherment practically impossible even if the general principle should be learned. In addition to this, the new method which I have invented has the advantage of being very simple to use. Any one of average intelligence could use it to put messages quickly into cipher, or to change messages quickly from cipher into plain language. No equipment is needed except pencil and paper. There is no complication in it as in most methods of cryptography. In many systems, a slight mistake made by the encipherer renders the whole message meaningless to the receiver. Also often the systems are so complicated that the receiver finds the message difficult or impossible to work out. It is no exaggeration to say that thousands of