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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**(TS) Management of National Reconnaissance Program**

**I. PURPOSE.**

This agreement relates to the establishment of a National Reconnaissance Program and to the establishment of arrangements within and between the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency for its management and operation in a manner which will insure that the particular talents, experience and capabilities within these two organizations will be fully and most effectively utilized in this effort.

**II. DEFINITIONS.**

A. NRP - National Reconnaissance Program, consisting of all overt and covert overflight projects for intelligence, geodesy, and mapping photography and electronic signal collection.

B. NRO - National Reconnaissance Office, as established herein for the purpose of managing the NRP.

C. DOD/AR - Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense, established by the attached DOD Directive No. \_\_\_\_\_; Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.

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**D. DDP/A - Deputy Director (Plans) of the Central Intelligence Agency; Deputy Director of the NRO.**

**E. DSR - Director of Satellite Reconnaissance (TS); the general officer responsible directly to the Director of the NRO for all field management and operation of satellite reconnaissance projects. The DSR is overtly known as the Director of Special Projects, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, for security reasons.**

**F. DAR - Director of Aircraft Reconnaissance, a covert position held by the general officer responsible directly to the NRO for all field management (excluding operation) of aircraft and drone overflight reconnaissance projects. The Director of Aircraft Reconnaissance will have a suitable overt title as required by the security of his projects.**

**G. MPG - Mission Planning Group, a part of the NRO which plans all specific overflight reconnaissance missions and determines targets to be covered by each specific mission.**

**I. SOC - Satellite Operations Central, a part of the NRO located within [REDACTED] which exercises NRO operational control of all satellite reconnaissance missions.**

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J. AOC - Aircraft Operations Central, a part of the NRO which exercises NRO operational control of all aircraft <sup>and ~~SECRET~~</sup> overflight reconnaissance missions.

### III. BASIC POLICY.

A. National Reconnaissance Program. The National Reconnaissance Program will consist of all satellite and overflight reconnaissance projects whether overt or covert. It will include all photographic projects for intelligence, geodesy and mapping purposes, and all electronic signal collection projects for electronic signal intelligence and communications intelligence.

B. National Reconnaissance Office. There will be established on a covert basis a National Reconnaissance Office to manage this Program. The Director of the NRO will be the Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense, and <sup>an</sup> overt (SECRET) position established by the attached DOD Directive No. \_\_\_\_\_. The Deputy Director of the NRO will be the Deputy Director (Plans) of the Central Intelligence Agency. The office will include a small special staff whose personnel will be drawn from the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. This office will have direct control of all elements of the total program.

C. Responsibility. In order to assure that the functioning of the NRO and the conduct of the NRP is based upon the assignment of clear and specific responsibilities, the total responsibility for the National

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Reconnaissance Program is hereby delegated by the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency to the Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense as Director of the National Reconnaissance Office. He will in turn delegate specific responsibilities to the Central Intelligence Agency and elsewhere as required to carry out the terms of this agreement. Initial delegation of responsibilities of projects presently underway is specified under part IV of this agreement.

D. Authority. Decisions of the National Reconnaissance Office will be implemented and its management of the National Reconnaissance Program made effective within the Department of Defense by the exercise of the authority delegated to the Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense, and within the Central Intelligence Agency by the authority delegated to the Deputy Director (Plans).

E. Operational Agency. Within the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force will be the operational agency for management and conduct of the National Reconnaissance Program, and will conduct this program through use of streamlined special management procedures involving direct control from the office of the Secretary of the Air Force to Reconnaissance Project Directors in the field, without intervening reviews or approvals. The management and conduct of individual projects or elements thereof requiring special covert arrangements may be

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assigned by the NRO to the Central Intelligence Agency as the operational agency.

F. Technical Advisory Group. A Technical Advisory Group for the National Reconnaissance Office will be established under appropriate security.

G. Security. A uniform security control system will be established <sup>for</sup> the total program by the National Reconnaissance Office. Products from the various programs will be available to all users as designated by the United States Intelligence Board.

H. Requirements. The National Reconnaissance Office will be directly responsive to, and only to, the photographic and electronic signal collection requirements and priorities as established by the United States Intelligence Board.

I. Public Information. The National Reconnaissance Office will develop suitable cover plans and public information plans in conjunction with the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, to reduce potential political vulnerability of these programs and to enhance security of program operations.

J. Program Review. Major program elements and operations of the National Reconnaissance Office will be reviewed on a regular basis and as special circumstances require by the Special Group under NSC 5412.

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**K. Management.**

**1. Technical Management.** The major portion of technical management of NRP projects will be carried out by the Director of Satellite Reconnaissance and the Director of Aircraft Reconnaissance, reporting directly to the National Reconnaissance Office. Technical management of specific parts of projects, such as certain payloads for instance, will be delegated to the Central Intelligence Agency and carried out under technical personnel assigned to the CIA part of the NRO. To provide for full use of available capabilities and resources, and to provide for interface with data exploitation equipment developed by agencies outside the NRO, Navy and Army representatives will be assigned, on a full-time basis, to appropriate positions within the NRO. They will be technically qualified in electronic signal collection work and in mapping and geodesy, respectively, and have NRO project responsibilities in these areas. A firm liaison channel between the NRO and NSA will be established as an adjunct to the technical management structure of signal collection projects.

**2. Financial Management.** The Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense will be responsible for funds for all projects of the NRP. Funds will be allocated on an individual project basis and will appear as appropriately classified line items in the Air Force budget.

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**L. Operations.**

**1. Mission Planning. A Mission Planning Group (MPG) will be established within the NRO to plan all specific missions of this program and to determine targets to be covered by each mission. The MPG will have Tri-Service, NSA AND CIA representation on a full-time basis, and will be chaired by a member of the CIA directly responsible to the DDP/A. The MPG will have available the complete schedules and technical capabilities of all of the sensor systems of all NRP projects, and accounts of the complete coverage obtained by all sensor systems of these projects, on a continuous basis. This Group will establish the pre-launch targeting selection for all reconnaissance projects of the NRP, and will transmit this information to the Satellite Operations Central (SOC) for satellite missions, and to the Aircraft Operations Central (AOC) for aircraft missions.**

**2. Satellite Operations. A Satellite Operations Central (SOC) will be established as a part of the NRO located within the Air Force [REDACTED] the SOC will be headed by the Air Force member of the NRO who will have operational control over all satellite reconnaissance missions throughout the conduct of such missions. The Head of the SOC will be directly responsible to the Director of Satellite Reconnaissance. The SOC will include appropriate CIA personnel.**

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**3. Aircraft Operations. An Aircraft Operations Central (AOC) will be established at an appropriate location under necessary security arrangements. The AOC will be headed by a CIA member of the NRO who will have operational control over all aircraft and drone overflight reconnaissance missions throughout the conduct of such missions. The Head of the AOC will be directly responsible to the DDP/A. The AOC will include appropriate Air Force personnel.**

**IV. PROJECT RESPONSIBILITIES. The Director of the NRO is responsible for all aspects of all projects of the NRP. In carrying out this responsibility, he will delegate specific aspects to the CIA and elsewhere, as appropriate. In this regard, the following initial delegation applies to the major projects presently under way.**

**A. CORONA/MURAL/ARGON: The Air Force has primary responsibility for: (1) launch scheduling and launching; (2) orbit and recovery operations; (3) development and procurement of boosters, orbiting vehicles, [REDACTED] CIA has primary responsibility for (1) development and procurement of photographic payloads and nose cones, and (2) project security. In addition, the CIA will provide the chairman of the MPG which will plan all missions of these projects, and will have membership in the SOC which will be headed by an Air Force member of the NRO and which will have operational control of these missions**

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during flight.

B. SAMOS. The Air Force has primary responsibility for SAMOS, with the CIA in a supporting role in regard to project security. In addition, the CIA and the Air Force have the same mission planning and operations roles described in A above.



D. OX CART. The Air Force will assume responsibility for the technical management of the OX CART project, with the CIA remaining responsible for the reconnaissance payloads, project security, and conduct of operations. Missions will be planned by the CIA-chaired MPG and conducted by the CIA-headed AOC, responsible directly to the DDP/A. The Air Force will establish an office of the Director of Aircraft Reconnaissance (DAR) to concurrently manage the development of OX CART and all variations of this development. The DAR will be established with care to provide maximum security for this effort and will be manned with highly qualified personnel whose experience, aptitude and ability make them especially well suited for this task. Normal Air Force and DOD development and management practices will not apply to this project, and the DAR will carry out his entire responsibilities

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under special management procedures appropriate to the nature of this project and the security required for its accomplishment, subject only to approval by the Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense.

E. CANES. Technical <sup>development</sup> management responsibility for this project is delegated to the Navy, subject to overall review and approval by the Director of the NRO. Mission planning will be accomplished by the MPG as for all other satellite projects of the NRP.

V. IMPLEMENTATION. This agreement is effective immediately within the Department of Defense and the CIA, and supersedes all previous directives in each agency on the subjects discussed herein. All such superseded directives will be revised to conform with these provisions at the earliest date.

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John A. McCone  
Director  
Central Intelligence Agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert S. McNamara  
Secretary of Defense

1 Atch  
1 DOD Directive No.

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