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Memo for SecDef, subj: HRP, 4 cys of R-5 and 3 Ser A						
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THE WHITE HOUSE
SAFSS WASHINGTON

October 10, 1963

1963 OCT 15 15 04

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: National Reconnaissance Program (NRP)

Deputy Secretary Gilpatric's memorandum of September 13 to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board reflects certain achievements, and in other instances continued efforts toward the realization, of key objectives of the Board's recommendation concerning which your comments were requested in my memorandum of June 7.

This office and the President's Board will look forward to the submission on your initiative of further reports on progress being made in accomplishing the goals of the National Reconnaissance Program. Meanwhile, it is understood that the Board will continue to maintain contact with your office for the purpose of considering NRP developments of mutual interest and concern.

imlary Rml
McGeorge Bundy

CC: The Director of Central Intelligence
President's Foreign Intelligence
Advisory Board

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SS-1					
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SS-3					
SS-4					
SS-5					
SS-6					

This is White House reply to
97-63-136p63

SAFSS 7563-420

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FROM: (Activity transferring documents)		DATE	PACKAGE NUMBER	NUMBER	SUSPENSE DATE
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Memo, transmittal of comments submitted on behalf of SecDef in regard to the NRO, Atch - subj: DOD Response to 6/7/63 Memorandum to White House Regarding FIAS Recommendations Concerning NRO, 4 cys of 5 and 3 Ser A					
cy 3 to [redacted] 280263					
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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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HANDLE VIA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] September 13, 1963
[REDACTED] 797-63

**MEMORANDUM FOR The President's Foreign
Intelligence Advisory Board**

Attached hereto are the comments submitted on behalf of the Secretary of Defense to the recommendations of your Board with regard to the National Reconnaissance Office, as transmitted to us with Mr. McGeorge Bundy's memorandum of June 7, 1963.

Enclosure

cc: Director, CIA
Mr. McG. Bundy

Mr. McNamara
Dr. McMillan
Dr. Fubini

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HANDLE VIA [REDACTED]

DoD Response to 6/7/63 Memorandum from White House Regarding
FIAB Recommendations Concerning NRO

In his supervision of and guidance to the NRO, the Secretary of Defense has adhered to the provisions of the NRO agreement of March 13, 1963. In the process of carrying out this agreement, certain problems and divergencies of viewpoint have, not surprisingly, occurred and are in fact not completely resolved at this time. It should be emphasized, however, that where such differences have occurred in the past the issues have been frankly discussed and worked out to the benefit of NRO operations.

It is the conviction of the Secretary of Defense that, aside from these occasional differences, the over-all operation of the NRO is satisfactory; that the NRO programs are producing, and will continue in the future to produce, important intelligence information; and that a smooth, steady state, and highly efficient operation of the NRO is beginning to be apparent.

In regard to specific recommendations of the Board, the following comments are offered on behalf of the Secretary of Defense:

Recommendation

"(A) a clear channel of guidance and authorization flow from the policy decisions of the President to the Secretary of Defense and, as provided in the agreement, to the Director of Central Intelligence;"

Comment

The guidance and authorization received via Presidential policy decisions, as expressed in both formal and informal meetings and papers, often require rapidly responsive implementing actions on the part of the D/NRO. Such decisions, when transmitted to the Secretary of Defense, are immediately communicated to D/NRO for incorporation into his operating policies. Such communication is effected by the Secretary of Defense himself, the Deputy Secretary, or by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Deputy Director of Research and Engineering). In the opinion of the Secretary of Defense, there already exists the clear channel of guidance and authorization recommended by the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

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Recommendation

"(b) a clear and effective connection be established between the advance technology and planning of the national reconnaissance program, and the development plans for reconnaissance capabilities of the Department of Defense and the military services;"

Comment

Several steps have been taken to establish a clear and effective connection between the advanced technology and planning of the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) and the development plans for reconnaissance capabilities of the Department of Defense and the military services. The Secretary of Defense has assigned exclusive responsibility to the NRO for the research, development and operation of all reconnaissance mapping and geodesy systems, of both photographic and electronic signal type, which are developed for and are operated in overflight of denied areas. This basic assignment was made initially by a Top Secret Department of Defense Directive* and has been supplemented by further memoranda** which have pointed out that this responsibility includes the research and development responsibilities for satellite reconnaissance systems to be used in general or limited war, and the operation of such systems, to the extent that any development and operation of such systems may be approved. The Secretary of Defense has assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff the responsibility for determining, and submitting for his approval, the military requirements for such capability.

Provision has been made within the organizational structure of the NRO to monitor potentially overlapping areas of NRO and other DoD research and development. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Deputy Director of Research and Engineering) has been given the responsibility to monitor all aspects of the NRO on behalf of the Secretary. He and his assistant review non-NRO research and development activities of the DoD agencies and services and take appropriate action to re-direct overlapping effort. In addition, responsible personnel within key development areas have been briefed on the entire NRO development and operational program. In some cases, these development areas have provided substantial support to the NRO effort, and in others the NRO has provided assistance to non-NRO effort; an example is the area of peripheral reconnaissance.

* DoD Directive TS 5105.23, 14 June 1962

** SecDef memo for Ch, JCS, 29 Jan 1963

DepSecDef memo for Ch, JCS, and D/NRO, 31 May 1963

In addition to the above steps, the Army and Navy have provided highly qualified technical officers for full time duty in key development billets within the Air Force element of the NRO on a full time basis, and the NRO Staff includes full time billets filled by personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force, CIA, NFIC and NSA.

Recommendation

"(c) plans be made to improve the continuity of management of the NRO, particularly with respect to career specialists who may be heavily taxed in meeting schedules for new satellites, aircraft and other reconnaissance instrumentalities;"

Comment

Continuity of management has been provided for by establishing direct monitoring of key personnel moves by the Director, NRO. All inter-agency billets are filled by D/NRO acceptance of personnel nominated by Service Secretaries or Agency Directors in response to his specific invitation. In addition, a special personnel procedure has been established within the Air Force whereby a relatively large number of essential support personnel have been identified on special lists for which the specific prior approval of the D/NRO is required in order for any change to be made in duty assignment.

Recommendation

"(d) pains be taken to ensure consistency between Department of Defense directives which guide the national reconnaissance program and pertinent directives emanating from higher authority, such as National Security Council Intelligence Directives."

Comment

Certain of the guidance given by higher authority takes the form of recommendations for certain actions, and in other instances takes the form of explicit policy guidance. The latter then become part of Defense Department operating procedures. Recommendations for certain actions are carefully considered by the D/NRO and the results of this consideration passed to the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence for further reporting to higher authority and appropriate

action. The D/NRO should not be expected automatically to agree to every recommendation for such action, since, for example, after consideration of each individual case the implementation of the action might require that either the Secretary of Defense or the Director of Central Intelligence commit greater resources than are possible within the confines of their over-all budget restraints or technical capabilities. There will, in every case, be a prompt report back to higher authority on the final disposition of such recommendations.

Department of Defense directives, which the Secretary of Defense promulgates as executive agent for the NRP, are consistent with recommendations and policies emanating from higher authority in the ways already indicated. Occasionally situations can arise in which the interpretation of a particular directive from higher authority is subject to more than one view. However, the Secretary of Defense and Director of Central Intelligence are capable of ensuring that their guidance to the NRO will be consistent with and responsive to such directives.

Recommendation

"(c) within the Department of Defense present and planned relationships be clarified as between the NRO, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency."

Comment

The D/DIA is kept completely knowledgeable of all aspects of the NRP as requested. In addition, his membership on USIB permits him to participate in the formulation of requirements to which the NRP is responsive. As the NRP is further carried out and as DIA further builds up its capabilities, the relationship between DIA and the NRO will become more complete and will allow DIA to make increasingly effective use of its NRP knowledgeability to make possible changes or adjustments in any other intelligence programs, which have been assigned to DIA for management or review responsibility, permitting maximum explicit use of NRP capabilities within proper security confines. This will be an evolutionary process and will always take account of the fact that the NRP is a program responsive to national needs with a direct chain of command between the Secretary of Defense as executive agent for the NRP and the D/NRO, and that the D/DIA has been assigned the responsibility as the principal intelligence advisor for the Department of Defense.

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In regard to the NSA, the primary interest vis-a-vis the NRP lies in the non-image forming collection capability developed for the NRO. The participation of the NSA in this aspect of the NRO activity is now beginning to be fairly complete. The NSA has, for example, stationed in the NRO, and responsible to the D/NRO, personnel thoroughly familiar with SIGINT collection and processing problems. In addition, the NSA processes, in accordance with existing agreements, certain of the data collected from satellite SIGINT operations conducted by the NRO. Further, the D/NSA, in preparing the National ELINT Plan, has considered certain aspects of NRO responsibilities in the ELINT area. Finally, the D/NSA participates in USIB and is, therefore, in the position of helping to formulate requirements to which the NRO is responsive.

In regard to both DIA and NSA these present arrangements are to the benefit of both the NSA and DIA responsibilities, as well as being of direct assistance to the NRP. These arrangements will continue to improve and be capable of more explicit description as a steady state operation of the NRO is achieved in accordance with the March 13th agreement.

General Comment

The Secretary of Defense is doing, and will continue to do, in coordination with the Director of Central Intelligence, his utmost to make certain that the resources of both the DoD and CIA are fully utilized and efficiently managed by the D/NRO under the joint guidance of the Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense. The NRP is a complex activity and some of the difficulties which have been experienced were to be expected, especially in view of the dedication and organizational pride of the individuals concerned. It is reasonable to anticipate, however, that the NRP, as managed by the D/NRO in his capacity as head of an operating agency, will meet the full expectations of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and the other individuals who have been largely responsible for its creation and for the statement of basic guidance for the program.

034/63

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOARD

Toward an Effective National Reconnaissance Office. The Director of Central Intelligence has made available to the Board a draft of a proposed "Agreement Between the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence on the Management of the National Reconnaissance Program." In the judgment of the Board, this draft agreement is the best conceived and most soundly detailed plan for the management, the mission and the operation of the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) that has come to our attention. We urgently recommend its immediate adoption.

In the course of implementing the agreement and in carrying out its plan we recommend, in addition, that:

(a) a clear channel of guidance and authorization flow from the policy decisions of the President to the Secretary of Defense and, as provided in the agreement, to the Director of Central Intelligence;

(b) a clear and effective connection be established between the advance technology and planning of the national reconnaissance program, and the development plans for reconnaissance capabilities of the Department of Defense and the military services;

(c) plans be made to improve the continuity of management of the NRO, particularly with respect to career specialists who may be heavily taxed in meeting schedules for new satellites, aircraft and other reconnaissance instrumentalities;

(d) pains be taken to ensure consistency between Department of Defense directives which guide the national reconnaissance program and pertinent directives emanating from higher authority, such as National Security Council Intelligence Directives; and

(e) within the Department of Defense present and planned relationships be clarified as between the NRO, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency.

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COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

The agreement on the NRO has now been completed and is in the process of implementation. This agreement, in my opinion, establishes a clear channel of guidance and clarifies the relationships and responsibilities between the Department of Defense and CIA, both of whom have serious responsibilities in this field. The agreement will ensure that there is close coordination and intense effort in advanced technology and planning of the national reconnaissance program and also the current reconnaissance efforts. We will watch closely the management of the NRO and ensure that this program is now successful in every respect.

The new agreement on the NRO provides for close relationships between the NRO and the United States Intelligence Board.

With respect to the specific recommendations on the subject, they encompass a number of obvious management problems. The arrangements for handling these problems are outlined in the recently executed NRO agreement. The carrying out of this agreement in an effective manner depends on close collaboration between the DCI and the Secretary of Defense. It should be noted that there is a natural interface between CIA and the Department of Defense in the vital and complicated area of overhead reconnaissance. Management of this problem calls also for close collaboration between responsible authorities in both departments.

The new agreement which is being implemented was reached after due consideration of the possibility of either Defense or CIA taking full responsibility for the reconnaissance program. It was decided that this would be unwise because on the one hand it would involve relocating vast resources from the Department of Defense. On the other hand it would involve a loss of responsibility and imaginativeness which exists in CIA and which has made many valuable contributions in the field of overhead reconnaissance. Moreover, transfer from CIA would run the risk of losing a vantage for secrecy which the Agency is so well qualified to protect.

The NRO agreement has been drafted with all the above factors in mind, and I concur in the judgment of the Board that it is a well conceived and soundly detailed plan for the management of this important program.

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