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25 January 1962

POLICY GUIDANCE FOR CONGRESSIONAL WITNESSES
RE: SAMOS PROJECT

The sensitivity and political vulnerability of the U. S. satellite reconnaissance effort, as embodied in the SAMOS project, dictates the utmost in discretion and application of rigorous need-to-know procedures at all echelons. To this end, and in anticipation of the many essential appearances of witnesses before various Congressional committees, the following information and guidance is provided.

I. BACKGROUND:

A. Over the past few years, this project, either as WS-117L or SAMOS, has been reported upon and discussed from many points of view before many committees of both Houses of Congress and by witnesses at practically every level of the Department of Defense. From the above, it can be reasonably assumed that:

L. A majority of both houses of Congress are basically familiar with the intent and function of the SAMOS satellite development.

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2. Project details and capabilities are not generally known and have only been given in closed classified sessions, on a specific need-to-know basis.

3. The Congress in general, and the important committees specifically, are very much aware of the national significance and urgency in achievement, at the earliest possible date, of a satellite reconnaissance capability, and of the necessity for very tight security concerning the details of this effort.

II. GUIDANCE:

A. General.

1. SAMOS project information will not normally be included in prepared statements or briefings. Congressional testimony and information regarding SAMOS project will be given by the Under Secretary of the Air Force as required. Chairmen of appropriate Committees will be briefed by the Under Secretary and their cooperation asked in minimizing or eliminating Committee discussion of this subject.

2. SAMOS project will not be discussed in open session, notwithstanding the amount of previous years' information in the public domain or press speculation. Reply under these circumstances will simply state that:

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a. The subject is classified and query cannot be answered in open session, and/or

b. The SAMOS project is outside the cognizance of the witness.

3. When in closed session, if possible within the context of material being submitted or previous discussion, witness should respectfully state, as in subparagraph b. above, that the SAMOS project is outside his cognizance.

B. Specifics. In those instances where witnesses in closed session (Secret level) are unable to avoid discussion or answer to query regarding SAMOS, replies to specific questions will be couched within the framework of the following information, using the minimum reply acceptable to the Committee and refraining from any voluntary elaboration.

1. There is in existence no specific SAMOS system or program which is intended or planned to be a complete means of conducting reconnaissance via space. Public conjectures and speculations concerning occasional flights of space vehicles are based on misinterpretation of the role of such flights.

2. It is generally recognized that there are very broad areas of development in reconnaissance techniques and equipments, and

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development of space technology, which it is in our interest to explore adequately. These broad areas are pursued over a wide spectrum of experiments, which are conducted from time to time, and which have been popularly considered to be SAMOS missions. These flights are in fact experimental demonstrations of components and techniques which are being developed under the broad program we are conducting in further development of reconnaissance and space technology concepts. Such experiments are needed to furnish final verification of component developments; these component developments need to be tested in the actual space environment as final proof of their technical adequacy. Because the number of such experiments is large, in order to properly pursue the many desirable developments and techniques, the number of flights which must be conducted is also large. Typical component developments which will be involved are equipments to gather information, methods of providing power in space for extended periods of time, development of vehicle attitude control systems for extended duration in orbit, reliable in-flight remote control of payload, etc.; typical techniques which will be involved are such as relate to precision de-orbiting and recovery of space capsules, methods for efficiently programming equipments in orbit, methods for developing highly reliable long-duration subsystems of space vehicles, etc.

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3. These developments are of very general usefulness and importance to our national space program as a whole, and to the future development of reconnaissance equipments of many sorts. Further decisions beyond the scope of the present broad experimental effort are dependent upon results of these current developments.

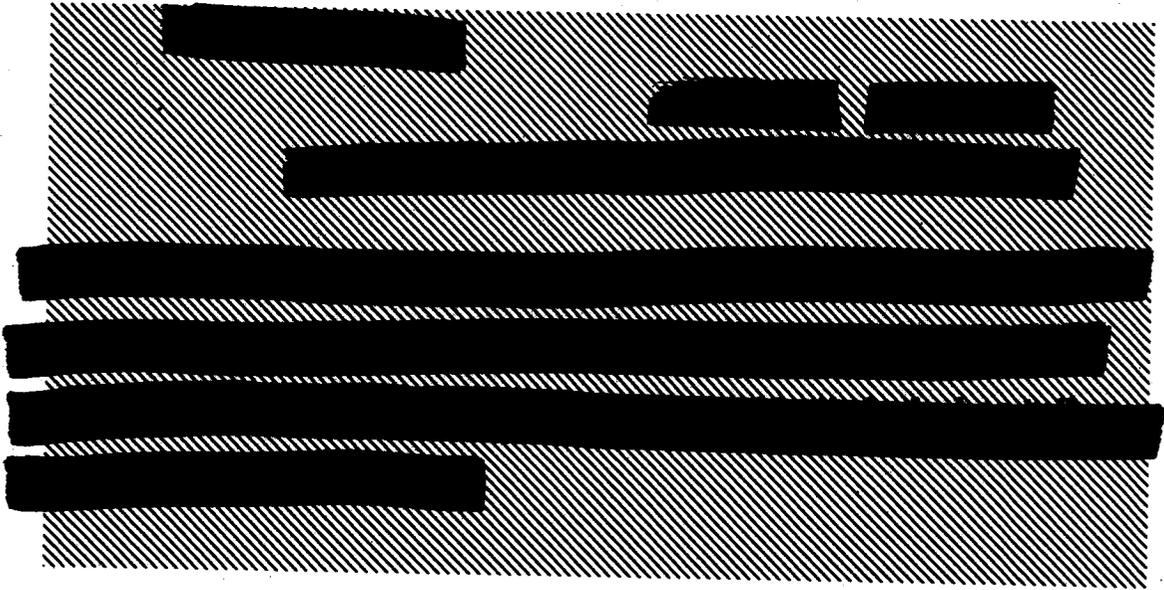
4. The visual (photo) development has included electronic readout and recoverable payloads. Electro-magnetic (ferret) payloads are being developed on a progressively more advanced basis from initial research and development feasibility version to advanced digital and analogue techniques.

5. As of 1 January 1962, 5 satellite reconnaissance vehicles have been launched (3 readout - 2 recoverable types). Of these, two were successfully placed in orbit. The first provided useful test data on both photo and ferret readout components; the second, a recoverable type system, provided useful data via telemetry, but malfunctioned while in orbit and recovery was not accomplished.

6. Reconnaissance flight schedules are especially sensitive and very closely held in order to minimize the chance of inadvertent compromise which could result in effective Soviet countermeasures.

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