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27 JUN 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Press Statement Concerning Satellite
Reconnaissance Vehicles

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for your approval. Said recommendation is contained in paragraph 8.
2. The Under Secretary of the Air Force in a memorandum to Mr. Gilpatric, dated 15 June 1962 (see Tab A), proposed that a single contingency plan be established applicable to all satellite reconnaissance vehicles. The contingency plan had as an attachment a proposed press statement for release in the event of recovery by a hostile nation of either a DISCOVERER or SAMOS capsule.
3. The proposed contingency plan has been reviewed by this office, and we agree with Dr. Charyk's approach; however, it is believed that the proposed press statement can be improved by certain revisions and additions. A revised version of the press statement is attached (see Tab B) for your approval and subsequent review by the Special Group. Although this modified statement has not as yet been coordinated with Mr. Johnson or Dr. Charyk, it has been discussed at working group level in both agencies. The Air Force group strongly endorsed this proposed version; however, the State Department people equally as strongly prefer their own modified version which, it is understood, was presented by Mr. Johnson to the Special Group Meeting on 21 June 1962.
4. It is suggested that any press statement agreed to at this time should be predicated on the assumption that Soviet reaction to the type of incident envisioned will be violent and far-reaching from the standpoint of propaganda exploitation. If, for any reason, the Soviets should elect to treat the incident in a low key, our

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on _____


response should then be modified to be less provocative than the press statement which the first situation would require. Specifically, the reference to Soviet satellites could be deleted. A mild reaction by the Soviets, however, is considered to be only a remote possibility.

5. With regard to suggestions that our initial response should be an abbreviated statement designed to buy time, we do not agree. Any statement made should be matter-of-fact, forthright and sufficiently comprehensive to establish our position right from the beginning. Failure to do so will result in news media accusations of indecisiveness, confusion, and duplicity, and will inevitably weaken our position vis-a-vis the legitimacy of satellite observation.

6. It is also suggested that if the capsule recovered is in fact a SAMOS payload, serious consideration should be given, in light of the circumstances at the time, to acknowledging the SAMOS association if it appears that by doing so we might protect the past history and prolong the life of the DISCOVERER program.

7. If, as the situation develops, subsequent public statements are deemed advisable, emphasis should be placed on the desirability of satellite observation as a means of maintaining world peace by reducing the possibility of surprise attack from closed societies.

8. It is recommended that you endorse the attached proposed press statement (Tab B) and submit it for approval at the next Special Group Meeting.


HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

Attachments

- Tab A - As stated
- Tab B - As stated

Recommendation in para. 8 APPROVED:

Director of Central Intelligence

Date

SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE EXECUTIVE PLAN

SITUATION:

Although all possible precautions are taken, it is possible that a malfunction or orbit may cause re-entry of a reconnaissance satellite capsule to occur at other than the prescribed time and place, exposing the full reconnaissance capability of the particular vehicle to a hostile or unfriendly power. The possibility of the capsule re-entering the atmosphere at an unauthorized location would be a serious security matter and would thus also expose the full

be damaged beyond usefulness, and would thus also expose the full

Whenever the possibility exists that any type of satellite vehicle is about to re-enter other than the prescribed time and place, [redacted]

[redacted], will immediately notify the Under Secretary of the

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such re-entry is certain, or the danger is past. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] will arrange for standby recovery forces to remain in place or in readiness to handle unexpected situations leading to a possible subsequent retrieval in those cases where the capsule re-enters over ocean areas. If it can be determined through evidence that re-entry would occur outside the prescribed area, but over the ocean area, search will be initiated by the [REDACTED] through available air-sea rescue facilities.

Headquarters, U.S. Air Force; No. Air Force Department

statements are to be furnished to the [REDACTED] Space Systems Division, but only at the direction of the Under Secre-

Department of State, when it is determined that [REDACTED] the Under Secretary to the [REDACTED] with the Secretary of Defense or the Deputy Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Deputy Director (Research), CIA (Dr. Scoville), that a foreign power is involved, the responsibility for all action and public announcements will transfer to the Department

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of State. No comment will be made by the Department of Defense or Hq USAF unless released by the Department of State (Mr. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, or his alternate, Mr. Roger Hillsman). Should it prove that the capsule has been retrieved by a hostile foreign power (Soviet or Soviet Bloc country) and their reaction identifies the contents of the capsule with a reconnaissance effort, the attached statement ^(Enclosure #1) should be made to the press in response to query, by the person designated by the Department of State.

1 Attachment
Statement for Press

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PRESS STATEMENT

As announced by _____, it is quite possible that a United States-launched recoverable capsule containing photographic equipment re-entered the atmosphere over _____ and was retrieved by authorities of that country.

We long ago publicly announced our intention ^{in the same program} to develop the photographic, ~~observational~~ potentialities of satellites. The details of the research and development efforts of this nature have naturally been classified and not given public release; however, our general intent was freely acknowledged even before the earliest successful earth-satellite vehicles were flown.

International law imposes no prohibition on observation or photography of the earth from outer space. Such action is peaceful in character, and does not interfere with other activities on earth or in space. For example, we consider that the observations made by Major Titov while aboard VOSTOK II, as indeed any other observation which the USSR may be conducting from outer space, are peaceful. Observation of the earth from satellites makes possible the accomplishment of many tasks beneficial to mankind, such as weather forecasting, resource surveys, mapping, and geodesy.

In this connection, the Soviet Union some time ago developed a capability for satellite photography and demonstrated this by taking

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pictures of the back side of the moon. The Soviet Union has not disclosed which of its other satellites orbiting over other countries contained photographic apparatus, nor has the Soviet Union released the results of any such photography.

Our satellite observation program is entirely peaceful in intent and poses no threat to any nation.

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