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15 January 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Photographic Intelligence Center
SUBJECT : 117L Advisory Committee Report

1. I have read the subject report with great interest, but with even more alarm. I appreciate greatly your making it available to me.
2. My immediate reaction upon reading the conclusions and then the comments in the text of the document is that this committee is acting in terms of our having called for its views on all aspects of the SENTRY program, including types of sensors and even types of vehicles to be used, although I had understood that the committee was supposed to focus its attention on ground readout, processing, and analysis. I might add that I feel that much of the committee discussion is highly unrealistic in that it consists of argumentation that both recovery and "talk-back" reconnaissance satellites should be developed, and that the 6" as well as the 36" camera should be flown, without regard to the necessity for making choices so as to remain within a tight budget.
3. My alarm derives from the extensive discussion in this report of recoverable satellites, all of which is set forth in a tone which implies knowledge by the writer that a recovery satellite program is at least under active consideration, if not already in progress. I am especially disturbed by paragraph IV, sub-paragraph F, which implies that a Thor-boosted reconnaissance satellite is already under development. These references lead me to conclude that the writer of the report knows or surmises the existence of CORONA and, what is even worse, that he is unaware of any improprieties in his discussion which is bound (in my view) to redirect attention to the whole topic of recoverable reconnaissance satellites. I might add a personal guess that the tone and content of the discussion were considerably influenced by one member of the committee, ~~SECRET~~
4. My concern over the security implications of this document are so great that I am, in a separate memorandum (copy attached), asking ~~SECRET~~ to undertake with the utmost urgency an investigation of the

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information that has been available to the members of this committee. Since the committee was established by the Air Force, he will of course need the help of appropriate components of the Air Force in this investigation. If it appears that any information concerning CCHOMA has been improperly disseminated to members of this committee, or that the ARPA or Air Force documents have been improperly classified, I propose to make a formal protest to the competent authorities. I desire your urgent and most complete cooperation in this investigation. I am sure that the first step should be a discussion between [redacted] and yourself. Perhaps you will be able to explain the background of the report in such a way as to relieve my extreme concern.

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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
DD/P

Distribution:

[redacted]

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15 January 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR: Security Officer, DPD-DD/P

SUBJECT : 117L Advisory Committee Report

REFERENCE : [REDACTED] Same Subject

1. I am sending you herewith a draft report to the Air Force by a 117L advisory committee furnished me by Mr. Lundahl and my comment on this document addressed to Mr. Lundahl concerning this report. My memorandum is self-explanatory. I will add that this may reflect a breach of security of exceptional seriousness, in that uncontrolled discussion by members of a technical group like this committee could be disastrously revealing in the technical community and thence to the technical press.

2. This will serve as my formal request to you to set in motion an investigation of this matter. I suggest you start with a discussion with Mr. Lundahl who may be able to relieve our fears. As the next step I would ask that you get in touch with Colonel Sheppard, since the basic draft report is for formal transmittal to M/General Schriever. I would appreciate it if you would keep me advised from time to time of your findings.

3. I am sending a copy of this memorandum to Mr. Kucera and it will serve as my request to him to help you in any way possible.

4. I would also ask Mr. Kucera to consider what steps we should take, if any, to insure that the dissemination of this report does not further confuse and thus delay the already agonizing review of the SENTRY/CORONA program that has been in progress in the last four months, but which has shown some signs recently of yielding a sensible conclusion. I fear the very least we can expect from this mischievous document is that it will provide more people with a new excuse to try to get into the act and second-guess the five or more groups of people who are trying to run the program.

(sgd) Richard M. Bissell, Jr.

RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.
DD/P

Distribution:

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