



Additional Astronautics Department

Research Project Proposal

U.S. Reconnaissance Satellites, Early History of

The historical prelude to reconnaissance satellites include cameras carried aloft in balloons, rockets, and aircraft before World War I. Since the early 1960s the United States and the U.S.S.R. have used satellites for this purpose, recovering payloads of film. Although neither country has yet announced that they have such programs, the SALT Agreement recognizes such "national means of verification."

Since this technology has advanced well beyond the early systems, release of the forerunners of such satellites for public exhibit is anticipated. Documentary research on this subject is proposed leading to an illustrated publication containing details of the early U.S. system. This would be available by the time the Museum creates an exhibit of a reconnaissance satellite.

Interviews would be held with individuals who played key roles in the development of the first U.S. application satellite. Treatment would be given of the proposition that such reconnaissance programs are of value in maintaining world peace.

Informal discussions with persons at the National Photographic Interpretation Center indicate encouragement of such research on a security classified basis aimed at declassification for publication. The proposer of this research has current and adequate security clearance to proceed with this work.

23 March 1976
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