

Reconnaissance Planning Group (Reber Group)

January 1968

The Reconnaissance Planning Group was established by agreement between the Director of Central Intelligence and the Director, NRO. The terms of reference for the group's activity include the following:

1. To keep the D/NRO and the DCI advised of emerging problems of the NRP, which involve closely related considerations of research and development, operations and intelligence requirements.
2. To review periodically the status of major planning activity in the area of overhead reconnaissance under way in the NRO and the USIB, and their constituent organizations, and to advise the organization responsible for the study on the adequacy of the scope, the desirability of additional participation or the need for consideration of additional planning factors.
3. To recommend to the D/NRO or the DCI the initiation of studies necessary to meet the overall planning needs of the intelligence community in the area of overhead reconnaissance.
4. To make available competent and authoritative representation from collection, exploitation, or requirements organizations, as appropriate, to support planning studies initiated in the USIB or the NRO.

Membership

Maj Gen Robert Taylor, III  
NIPE Staff

Dr. Donald H. Steininger  
PSAC

Mr. Carl Duckett  
DDS&T, CIA

Mr. Mitford Mathews  
NSA

Mr. William A. Tidwell  
COMIREX

Mr. Ernest J. Zellmer  
SORS

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~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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RPG-D-1  
February 6, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Taylor, NIPE Staff  
Dr. Steininger, PSAC Staff  
Mr. Duckett, DD/S&T, CIA  
NSA Representative  
Mr. Tidwell, Chairman of COMIREX  
Mr. Zellmer, Chairman of SORS

SUBJECT: Reconnaissance Planning Group

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Attached for your information and records is the exchange of correspondence between the Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Helms, and the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office, Dr. Flax, with regard to the establishment of the Reconnaissance Planning Group. Attached to Mr. Helms's letter are the approved Terms of Reference for the Group. As you will notice from Dr. Flax's letter, I am charged to proceed with implementation of these Terms of Reference.

The first meeting of the Group will be on Monday, February 12, 1968, at 2 p.m. and I look forward to seeing you in my office at that time. In anticipation of that meeting I am distributing a proposal for the establishment of target dates by which time annually the NRO would receive authoritative requirements guidance from the USIB to be compatible with financial/budget decision timing. It seems to me this is one of the most pressing problems which needs sorting out looking toward the improvement of overall NRP planning.

At this first meeting, let us review the Terms of Reference and identify the problems to which we should turn our attention and their order of priority. Would you give

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this your careful consideration. May I suggest that you set your preliminary thoughts to paper prior to this first meeting.

*James Q. Reber*  
James Q. Reber  
Chairman  
Reconnaissance Planning Group

Attachments  
BYE-4585-67  
BYE-12571-68

cc: Mr. John Hughes, DIA  
Gen. Russell Berg, D/NRO Staff.

*Col. Carter*

*RF*

*RD-2 (2)*

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

8 December 1967

The Honorable Alexander H. Flax, Director  
National Reconnaissance Office  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Al:

I have given considerable thought to proposals which have been the subject of discussion between you and John Bross earlier in the year about possible measures to strengthen our procedures for planning in the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) field. It is my impression that an increasingly effective relationship has developed over the last year or so between the NRO and USIB. It is possible, however, that we can further improve existing arrangements for ensuring that our needs for intelligence through overhead coverage and the responsiveness of reconnaissance systems to these needs are kept under constant review.

In this connection, it has been suggested that it might be helpful to establish a small group to identify and arrange for appropriate study of problems which appear to involve the interrelationship of intelligence needs and systems development. It seems to me that such a planning group could ensure that the needs of the intelligence community are defined with sufficient clarity to be helpful in planning the research and development and production of new systems and the modification of existing systems. It would identify and define the basic problems facing the NRP and keep us both informed of action which is being taken to analyze and study these problems, the status of any such studies and the agencies or individuals responsible for conducting the studies. Such a group might usefully recommend the initiation of new studies where desirable. Otherwise its purpose would be to monitor and review the status of planning and studies, both in the field of intelligence requirements and in that of systems development. It would not have decision-making authority.

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As to composition, I think that the group should be small and consist of a few senior officials who are qualified to understand the general nature of the problems involved in the NRP and who also are representative of senior echelons of agencies of the Government primarily concerned or interested in systems development in the NRP. It would seem to me appropriate to have this group function under NRO chairmanship. Your Deputy might appropriately serve as Chairman with a view to making sure that the activities and deliberations of the group are as useful as possible in assisting the D/NRO. As members of the group, I would suggest that the Deputy Director of NSA or some other appropriate representative of NSA be included in the group. The Deputy Director for Science and Technology of CIA would seem to me to be an appropriate member, and I would also suggest inclusion of Dr. Steininger in view of Dr. Hornig's interest in the systems development aspect of the NRP. I would also suggest that a member of the NIPE Staff be included to serve as my representative. I agree with what I understand to be your thought that the Chairman of COMIREX and the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Reconnaissance of the SIGINT Committee of USIB should serve on the group. I would expect the NIPE Staff member to arrange for such appearances or submissions as may seem appropriate or desirable from USIB agencies or committees other than COMIREX or the SIGINT Committee.

Attached are suggested terms of reference for the proposed group. I would appreciate your reactions.

Sincerely,



Richard Helms  
Director

Attachment

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Terms of Reference  
for the  
Reconnaissance Planning Group

- a. To keep the D/NRO and the DCI advised of emerging problems of the NRP, which involve closely related considerations of research and development, operations and intelligence requirements.
- b. To review periodically the status of major planning activity in the area of overhead reconnaissance under way in the NRO and the USIB, and their constituent organizations, and to advise the organization responsible for the study on the adequacy of the scope, the desirability of additional participation or the need for consideration of additional planning factors.
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WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

January 17, 1968

Dear Dick:

I am in wholehearted agreement with the arrangements for establishment of a Reconnaissance Planning Group as suggested in your letter of December 8, 1967 (BYE-4585-67). I also concur with the terms of reference which you attached to that letter.

I believe that this Group can greatly strengthen our procedures for coordinating planning for the National Reconnaissance Program and will provide an important additional channel for exchange of information and views regarding planning studies between the interested and responsible elements of the intelligence community.

I propose to proceed with the organization of this Group on the basis of the membership representation you have suggested. I understand from Mr. Bross that informal discussions have been held with General Carter and Dr. Steininger relative to the participation of the NSA and the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, respectively. I have asked Mr. Reber to serve as Chairman and to complete the necessary tasks related to organization as soon as possible, with a view to holding an early meeting of the Group and establishing an agenda for specific planning reviews of most immediate current concern.

*al*

Alexander H. Flax

The Honorable Richard Helms  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C. 20505

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