

~~TOP SECRET~~

HANDLE VIA
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CONTROL SYSTEM



~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.



1 4 MAY 1968

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-yja*

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Homer:

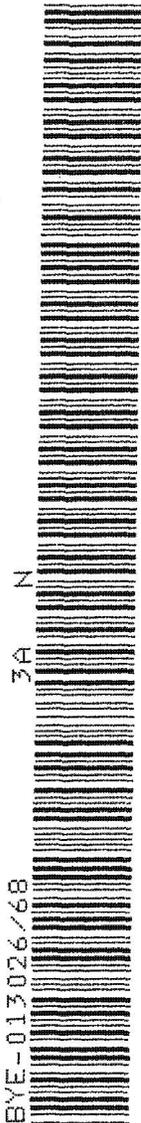
I was pleased to receive your letter of April 19 and appreciate your thoughtfulness in keeping us informed of your plans for developing an understanding of satellite observation policy in other governmental agencies.

Dr. Foster, Dr. Wilson, and I have reviewed your proposed in-house policy statement on satellite observation and agree with its content and classification. We believe it would strengthen your position with the in-house audience to add these clarifying sentences to the bottom of page 1, end of paragraph 3, as follows: "The nature and extent of such disclosure at any given time is subject to approval by the appropriate national authorities. Specific studies, plans, projects and programs which are not clearly within permissible levels of disclosure will therefore require review and coordination within the Government prior to action by NASA to initiate or implement such studies, plans, projects and programs." This makes it plain to the NASA reader that the issue goes far beyond technical considerations and that the approval authority is therefore outside any single governmental department.

Sincerely,

Alexander H. Flax

Dr. Homer E. Newell
Associate Administrator
National Aeronautics & Space Administration
Washington, D. C.
20546



BYE-013026/68

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DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT

1. It is the policy of NASA to support and further the concepts of open skies and freedom of space. The community of nations in general supports both concepts, either explicitly or tacitly; we may expect continued and even expanded acceptance unless governments or peoples believe that the exercise of these freedoms violates national sovereignty, invades domestic privacy, or usurps property rights.

2. NASA must therefore carry out its aeronautical and space activities under carefully developed ground rules that permit technological progress while avoiding confrontations that could jeopardize the nation's ability to work freely in space and in the air, either on a national or global scale.

3. One of the potentially most sensitive areas of NASA activities is earth observation from aircraft and spacecraft. Such applications programs as those in meteorology or earth resources surveys run the risk of being misconstrued as unfriendly acts on the part of the United States Government. NASA must, in the execution of its programs, protect the possibility of continued useful research and development activity in these areas. Public acceptance of earth sensing from space can best be achieved over a period of time. This calls for a gradual and controlled disclosure of spaceborne sensor capabilities rather than for any sudden revelation thereof.

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4. Since NASA's experience todate with earth sensor systems in space extends only to meteorological satellites and astronaut photography, the first phase of technological disclosure should not indicate too radical a departure from this prior base of published and open data. Therefore, for the present NASA will not discuss publicly, propose, fund, define, develop, or include in any mission:

- a. spaceborne image-forming devices capable of a ground resolution of less than 100 feet from 100 nautical miles altitude.
- b. spaceborne image-forming active emitters, such as lasers or radars, in any form.

5. To assure that, even within these constraints, international or security sensitivities are properly considered, all space-acquired earth imagery will be subject to classified review prior to public or in-house release. Procedures for such review are being developed by the Office of DOD and Interagency Affairs.

6. While airborne sensor technology is not under the same limitations as are space systems, sensors tested in aircraft for space application will conform to the ground rules noted above.

7. The security classification of this document is TOP SECRET. This classification extends to the existence of the policy as well as to its substance. Addressees will become thoroughly familiar with its contents, will abide by its spirit as well as its contents, and will so conduct their assigned duties as to assure that the stated policy is not contravened.

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8. Addressees are not authorized to discuss this policy or its implementation except with those officials indicated on the distribution list.

James E. Webb
Administrator

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