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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

March 24, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR OASD (ISA)

SUBJECT: Comments on State Department Draft Study

This memorandum responds to your request that we review a State Department draft study entitled "International Prospects and Problems in Remote Sensing of Earth Resources by Satellite," dated March 13, 1969. We appreciate the opportunity to review this paper. The comments which follow represent the consolidated thoughts of: the Office of the Assistant Director, Space Systems (DDR&E); the Office of the Assistant Director, Intelligence, Reconnaissance, and Electromagnetic Warfare (DDR&E); and the Office of Space Systems (OSAF).

Generally, we consider the State proposal to be a constructive initial effort and certainly worthy of consideration. The paper provides a thoughtful discussion of many hazards inherent in a venture of this nature. One of the more important among these is the general lack of an international distinction between information gathered for so-called "beneficial purposes" and that which is economic intelligence.

State's proposal for international cooperation in the ERTS program seems worthwhile in that it could provide a needed impetus to the general concept of such a program among the nations of the world.

We do not see the need for a new interagency committee to coordinate U.S. efforts in earth sensing. For some time the DOD has sponsored the concept of a single governmental focal point to monitor this activity. Specifically, we have suggested NASA, an active participant in international space efforts, as the logical candidate for this responsibility. This designation could be accomplished most effectively by issuing a National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) specifically designating NASA as

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"lead crew" for U.S. activities in remote sensing of earth resources. Once this were accomplished, State could negotiate directly with NASA on the political implications of such endeavors.

We do not share State's concern regarding a possible preemption by the Soviets in an international program. Why cannot Soviet participation or leadership in such a program be viewed as a constructive step forward in international cooperation? If the Soviets embark on such a program will they not be confronted by many of the problems discussed in the State paper? Won't efforts on their part to resolve these problems provide a firmer basis for extending international cooperation?

Finally, it should be kept in mind that it is difficult for the DOD to give a departmental response to State's draft study in view of the fact that the President has directed a Space Group to consider matters such as this from a national point of view. The optimum U.S. position will probably be better defined after those deliberations are completed.

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ODDR&E-OSA(TA)

*See RAR-B-17
for attachment*

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