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~~181~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

October 8, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGOUGH

SUBJECT: NRO Organization

Pursuant to our discussions on October 1 with you and Mr. [redacted], I have attached a paper which I believe satisfies your requirement.

As we suggested in our discussion, you may want [redacted] to hear a more detailed briefing on the functions of our SOC so that he might understand more clearly the requirements process and our activity in satisfying the stated requirements. This would be similar to that briefing we presented on October 1 to [redacted]'s group. We can arrange such a briefing on your request.

WILLIAM R. POST  
Colonel, USAF  
Deputy Director for  
Plans and Policy

Attachment

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DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

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The NRP is a single, national program which comprises the development, management and operation of satellites, aircraft and drones for photographic and electronic overhead reconnaissance of denied areas of the world. The Secretary of Defense, as executive agent for the NRP, makes all program decisions consistent with the needs expressed by the intelligence community. The NRP is guided by an Executive Committee of three members (the Deputy Secretary of Defense, its chairman; the Director of Central Intelligence, and the President's Science Advisor.) The Executive Committee actively participates in the formulation of the NRP through the Director, National Reconnaissance Office. The DNRO, subject only to the direction and control of the Secretary of Defense and the guidance of the Executive Committee, is singularly responsible for the management, and conduct of the entire Program. The National Reconnaissance Office is a separate operating agency of the DOD. The NRO is especially structured for single line, direct management and embodies resources of both the DOD and the CIA. There are four major program offices in the NRO, each managed by an individual who reports directly and solely to the DNRO, and who is responsible for all phases of assigned NRP efforts.

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The scope and content of the NRP are continuously reviewed by the Executive Committee. Major program efforts are subjected to thorough technical review by a Special Panel on NRP Matters which reports to the President's Science Advisor (as a member of the Executive Committee); the management of the program, its operational effectiveness, and the quality of its product are continuously reviewed by the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which reports directly to the President. The NRO conducts internally, on a continuing basis, numerous studies and analyses of special subject areas. These include such topics as the impact of new requirements, system concepts and tradeoffs, and the potential of new or advanced technology.

The people involved in the conduct of the NRP are selectively assigned and generally have had previous experience in one or more of the elements of the NRP. The military personnel assigned to (or in direct support of) the NRO are on longer term stabilized tours of duty to reduce any disruptive effect of personnel changes and to enhance the effectiveness of their contribution to the Program.

The NRP is a separately funded activity within the DOD. NRP financial and budget program review cycles are dynamic and responsive to essential program changes. NRO Program Directors submit their financial program estimates annually in May. This timing is normally

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one to two months behind that of other DOD agencies, but it provides the DNRO the latest and most accurate financial program data. The NRO is geared to respond quickly with detailed examinations of the data, and the issuance by the DNRO of detailed initial funding approvals to the Program Directors. Throughout the year, specific issues on program options, tradeoffs, cost options and the like are presented to the Executive Committee for decision. These issues are also identified for the Executive Committee in its review of the NRP financial program in August of each year.

Budget estimates are also submitted by the NRO Program Directors in May. These estimates are used in the consideration of the financial program. The detailed NRO budget review is not begun until the financial program is established and program options are selected. The DNRO budget review cycle continues through October. Detailed OSD and BOB examinations are also accomplished during this review cycle. In November of each year the DNRO presents the budget to the Executive Committee for its review and approval.

The NRP is responsive solely to the intelligence collection requirements and priorities established by the USIB. The NRO is an active participant in the formulation of requirements. The product of NRP systems is provided directly to the national agencies responsible for interpretation and exploitation.

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As an example of the very clear lines of authority and responsibility inherent in the NRO organization, the management, control and operation of an active photographic collection system are described in limited detail in the paragraphs which follow. The requirements for a particular mission are developed by a USIB committee, the Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation (COMIREX). The specific targets requiring coverage, and their relative priorities, are forwarded directly to the NRO Satellite Operations Center by the Imagery Collection Requirements Subcommittee of the COMIREX. The USIB specific collection requirements and priorities are then translated by the NRO into a targeting format against which a particular mission vehicle is operated. From this point on, until the processed film is delivered to the NPIC for interpretation, every element and individual involved in the conduct of the project are under the direct command and control of the Program Director who, in turn, reports directly to the DNRO. There is no ambiguity of project or program authority or responsibility, nor confusion in functional arrangements for the conduct of an operation. The Program Director has command and control authority over all elements involved in the project (e. g. , the launch base force at Vandenberg AFB, the AF world-wide satellite control network, the data re-entry vehicle

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recovery force, and the film processing facilities. The Program Director is responsible to the DNRO; there is no division of management responsibility or added levels of approval and decision authority.

The degree of success of an individual mission or overall project is determined then by the same USIB committee which stated the requirements. Evaluations are accomplished through a "closed loop" feedback of information on requirements, collection, and exploitation. The only measure of true worth of NRO activities is the degree to which stated USIB requirements have been satisfied.

If, for any reason, an NRP mission does not satisfy stated requirements, the DNRO is immediately informed through this same feedback process and corrective measures are instituted. In these situations, as in normal program conduct, lines of responsibility are clear. The Program Director is held accountable for system performance in satisfying stated requirements. His performance is judged on this basis. Likewise, his contractors, who are heavily incentivized on successful on-orbit performance, are graded in these terms and are, in fact, penalized financially for failures.