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 HANDLE VIA
BYEMAN-TALENT-KEYHOLE
 CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY

~~1ST~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
 WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

26 August 1971

INFORMAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Tasking of SIGINT Satellites

I. Introduction

1. This informal memorandum provides some of my thoughts on the subject of the tasking of SIGINT Satellites particularly as related to our relationship with NSA. They are forwarded for review prior to our scheduled discussion on 27 August. My apologies for the rough nature of this memorandum but the whole subject surfaced at the Staff Director/DDNRO level while I was on leave.

II. Background

2. Legal Basis

- a. Our Charter
- b. NRO Management Agreements with NSA

3. Difference between Tasking Telemetry versus ELINT versus COMINT.

- a. Telemetry - Volume low; no search or location just TI; know in advancement where, when, what and how. In short, it is easy and can be preplanned.
- b. ELINT - Volume large. Have multifunctions such as search, EOB, TI. Don't always know what or when or where or how. Hence, need support from home in terms of tasking advice and tipoff (non-missile/space).
- c. COMINT - Similar to ELINT but further complicated because you need more than one intercept plus much longer period of intercept. Again need tasking advice from home and non-missile/space tipoff (i. e., conventional). Remember bulk of COMINT is conventional and significant amount of telemetry and ELINT conventional. Not true for photo.

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Conclusion - More tasking support needed for COMINT and ELINT than telemetry.

d. Need skilled 24-hour support from home for:

- (1) Non-missile space tipoff.
- (2) Interpretation of previous days' effort with advice for today.
- (3) Working all three systems together in both missile and non-missile jobs.
- (4) Tactical type efforts.

4. NRO Approach to Tasking

- a. Needed assistance from NSA (i. e., management agreements).
- b. We provide tasking framework and NSA makes adjustments within that framework when needed. We monitor their adjustments.

III. Problems

5. Problems with this arrangement

a. There are no current major operational problems (i. e., the collection job is getting done in reasonably good fashion.

b. Have had a good number of political squabbles over control, message direction, etc., between SOC and NSA; NSA and CIA, NSA and Denver. Basically the political problem is between the SOC and NSA wherein NSA wants more control and we won't give it although we recognize our need for them to support tasking. The problem has not affected operations yet but will eventually if not remedied. Hence, we have worked out various procedural compromises with NSA, recognized the existence of a problem, briefed Dr. Naka last fall on it and got his approval for our April-May 1971 joint manning at SSSC and are preparing our evaluations and recommendations.

6. Statement of Problem - Develop a tasking mechanism which supports operations and is satisfactory to all parties involved (SORS, CIA, NRO, SP, NSA).

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7. Factors Relating

a. Prime dissatisfaction is by NSA and it is basically political. Other parties are reasonably satisfied with present procedures although they would react to any major change.

b. The NRO needs NSA to support payload development, man ground stations and support tasking; hence our final position on tasking can adversely affect the other relationships with NSA.

c. Some adjustment in NSA/SOC relationship eventually required or else our political squabbles will start to affect operations.

IV. Possible Solutions

8. Options

a. Remove NSA completely from the tasking business by major increases in SOC manning and communications (i. e., develop a SOC run SSSC). Comment - impractical from a resource and political/legal standpoint.

b. Get ourselves out of the tasking business by changing our charter. Comment - unrealistic plus contradicts the basic purpose of a NRO.

c. Maintain status quo. Comment - Acceptable for the near-term.

d. Get SORS more closely involved in operational decisions now made by us and NSA. Would finesse NSA. Comment - Will cause more ills than it corrects. Would result in ICRS/SOC relationship. Also a bad precedent for NRT/EOI environment.

e. Have SOC work more closely with NSA/SSSC. Comment - My preferred solution can improve operations, fulfill our legal responsibilities, be acceptable to other parties, and should be acceptable to NSA. Details can be worked out by the SOC but would involve some permanent stationing of NRO/SOC people at the SSSC. Proper protection for our perogatives, etc., can be obtained. We have been developing a solution along these lines.

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V. Final Comments

9. In photography virtually all pictures come from satellites and hence the SOC has a monopoly on tasking and no competitor and nobody else with tasking experience/expertise. In SIGINT, majority of data comes from conventional sources which NSA tasks. We cannot ignore their expertise nor their input to tasking from non-overhead sources.



Distribution:

Dr. Naka

Col Bradburn



Mr. Murphy

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