



ISSUES
FOR
NRP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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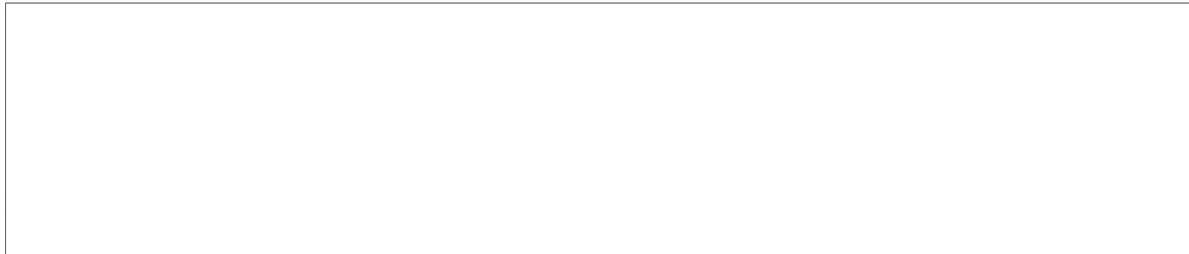
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

March 13, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NRP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The following four topics will be discussed at the NRP Executive Committee meeting on March 14, 1972. Background material on the first three topics is included herein.



b. Anti-Satellite. Because of continuing interest in the anti-satellite area and possible impact on the National Reconnaissance Program, I believe consideration of this matter is appropriate now. The issue involved is the NRO role in a satellite inspection/negation program.

c. Disclosure of the "Fact Of" Satellite Reconnaissance. A background paper is also included on the current status of the NSAM 156 Committee deliberations of the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance during the SALT ratification process.

d. KENNEN Status Report. A brief statement on the status of the KENNEN procurement will also be presented.

John L. McLucas
John L. McLucas

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ANTI-SATELLITEBACKGROUND

The Soviet Union has extensively tested both direct ascent and coorbital anti-satellite systems, having invested an estimated half billion dollars equivalent. This already extensive and growing capability clearly constitutes a serious threat to the NRP as well as most other U.S. satellite programs. There are indications that the Soviet coorbital system may be optimized for NRP photosatellites. Concerned with this growing threat, I requested USIB guidance on the NRO position on a U.S. anti-satellite capability in August 1971. COMIREX responded, "To the extent that it would serve as an effective and valuable deterrent, demonstration of the essential elements of an anti-satellite system through a selective R&D test program, is considered to be a valid national objective."

The U.S. has spent about \$700 million since 1962 on satellite inspection, negation, and surveillance systems. About \$200 million of this amount has been spent on studies, "technology programs," and subsequently cancelled system projects. Some funds are still being expended in the technology area.

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The bulk of U.S. spending to date has been to improve SPADATS tracking capability and develop the 437 nuclear direct ascent system. Thus, after ten years of effort, the nation has a tracking and reporting net and an interception system (on 30-day readiness status at Johnston Island) with no inspection capability. The actual use of our nuclear interception system would not only violate the treaty against nuclear tests in space, but would as well seriously damage or disable much of the U.S. space inventory.

DISCUSSION

In late 1971, a contractor (RCA) proposed a low cost demonstration flight vehicle to perform an inspection and negation mission. The proposed vehicle makes use of developed and space qualified subsystems. We have reservations about the cost and schedule as proposed, but do believe that the approach will result in a relatively low cost, low risk flight vehicle. The system concept uses a ground-based manual operator in the loop, thus saving on-board weight and complexity. It utilizes a television camera/recorder system which would provide a very large number of

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high resolution images of the target. I have discussed this proposal with the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Air Force, SAFSS, SAFRD and DDR&E. The consensus is that while it is not likely that the RCA scheme is the best way to go for an operational system (if indeed an operational system is desired), it is a good candidate for a low cost demonstration only.

One ramification of the proposed demonstration deserves mention. The Soviet Union is well aware that the U.S. has the technical capability to develop a non-nuclear satellite inspection/negation system. However, the deterrent value of such a system would certainly be much greater if the Soviets remain convinced that a capability, once perceived, remains in being, ready to be used at the President's option. Therefore, if the demonstration only were to be done, without a follow-on operational system development, security must be very tight to protect the "empty pipeline" behind the demonstration. This necessity for tight security may be reason to consider doing the demonstration work within the BYEMAN security system.

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SUMMARY

Concern is increasing at high levels of government and the DOD over the growing Soviet capability in the anti-satellite area. In the face of this growing Soviet anti-satellite capability, the U.S. has not demonstrated a non-nuclear anti-satellite system either as a deterrent or as a defensive system, but a retaliatory capability might serve as a deterrent and thereby protect the NRP, whose vehicles are prime targets.

There is diverse opinion as to whether this work should be done at all, and if so, whether in the black or white.

The issues, then, are:

a. What should the nation be doing in the anti-satellite systems area? This is being examined by the Kissinger Study Group.

b. What entity should manage the work? Specifically, should the NRO enter the anti-satellite field by conducting a limited demonstration of a non-nuclear inspection/negation test? This is a new area of endeavor outside the NRP Charter and would exploit the capability of the NRO to work in secrecy.

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STATUS OF "FACT OF" DISCLOSURE WITH REGARD TO SALT RATIFICATION

BACKGROUND

In September 1971, with the progress of the SALT negotiations in mind, I requested the NSAM 156 Committee to consider a policy which would preclude an inadvertent disclosure of the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance during the SALT ratification process. The NSAM 156 Committee was formed in 1962 at the direction of President Kennedy to recommend a political and informational policy on satellite reconnaissance. The Committee has addressed issues from time to time over the years at the call of the President, the National Security Advisor, and the representative agencies. Present national policy is that the Government does not acknowledge the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance. This policy has served well to protect the security of the program.

DISCUSSION

The NSAM 156 Committee Working Group has held several meetings on my September request. The issue of necessity

for admitting to the "fact of" under pressure of public and Congressional questioning has been discussed from several different points of view and some shift of feeling during the discussion. As a result, several agency positions have not been formally clarified, and there has been no definitive policy-oriented response to my question and no recommendation to the President or Dr. Kissinger on the subject.

Ambassador Johnson's illness has influenced the lack of movement for the past several weeks in finalizing a response to my question. I have been informed that Ambassador Johnson's staff will be briefing Under Secretary Irwin within the next two weeks. Among the briefing items will be a review of the NSAM 156 Committee activity. Two options appear open. One option is to respond to me by saying that at this time no definitive agreement can be reached as to a "fact of" policy for SALT ratification and defer the issue until a later time. The second option is to respond to me in the above manner and also to transmit the issue to the Verification Panel for review in the larger SALT context. Mr. Irwin will apparently guide the next step to be taken by State.

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SUMMARY

There is some sentiment that it is premature at this time to address the SALT ratification process and "fact of" disclosure and that perhaps the NSAM 156 Committee is not the proper forum to make recommendations on this issue. On the other hand, I feel that there needs to be careful and deliberate consideration of whether there is real necessity for "fact of" release in view of the implications such a release may have on the U. S. capability to verify SALT treaties or agreements. I feel that an official "fact of" admission to explain the nature of "national technical means of verification" may not be a wise policy as an inducement to ratification. I also feel that the present policy prohibiting such disclosure should be restated to Government spokesmen. The Verification Panel should give consideration to this policy prior to the signing of agreements. I will stand ready to present these views to the Verification Panel in any manner which the ExCom may feel appropriate.

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