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WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

23 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: SIGINT Satellite Operations

BACKGROUND: The NRO/SOC moved a detachment out to NSA to take advantage of SIGINT expertise available at SSSC. Further background in the form of a briefing or memorandum will be provided if desired.

DISCUSSION: With the establishment of NSOC and the current reorganization of NSA it appears that the SSSC will rapidly exist only on paper and functionally will be worthless. The ground sites could probably "exist" without either the SOC or the SSSC; however, there would be a deterioration of "orchestration among systems," a drop of collection efficiency due to an apparent lack of concern and information provided by Washington, and a larger communications gap between the systems on orbit and both the NRO Staff and the USIB structure, i.e., someone has to support and guide the "troops in the trenches."

The following indications have led to the drafting of this memorandum:

a. The NSA manning level at the SSSC has dropped from about 45 to 15 and there are no signs of any reliefs. They appear to be leaving in order of desirability, i.e., the best performers have already gone.

b. The ops comm and SOCOMM circuits to the sites are moving from SSSC to NSOC.

c. All of the A, B, and G group representatives appear to be transferring back to their groups or to new elements within NSA.

d. All of the TPO's, i.e., those who thought they were performing the NRO/SOC function before the advent of the NDF, either have left without replacement or are quietly mumbling about leaving in the near future without replacement.

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e. The 24-hour watch, i.e., one of the major "reasons to be" for the SSSC and one of the major reasons for establishing the detachment at Ft. Meade rather than staying here in the Pentagon, appears to be leaving in the near future (rumor is September).

f. Nobody's talking. We have asked specific questions concerning the above to the Director, SSSC; deputy director, SSSC; and NSA SORS Representative and they either honestly don't know what's going on or the information is compartmented.

POSSIBLE ACTIONS:

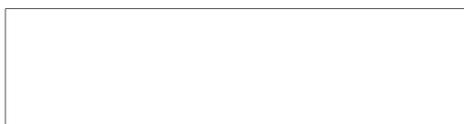
a. Take advantage of what appears to be a pending power vacuum by doubling the manning of the NDF and actually performing the NRO/SOC mission as exists in the NRO charter.

b. Fold up our tents, come home, deal directly with the ground sites, and cut the cables on the NSA/MGS ops comms.

c. Quietly sit by, twiddle our thumbs and watch the rest of the world go by.

d. Demand an official explanation from NSA concerning their plans for reorganization and how they relate to NDF/SSSC relations. (We tried this option once recently by setting up a meeting with Dr. Hermann and Mr. Singel on the subject.)

In summary, I would be most happy to pursue any of the above courses of action as soon as some guidance is received or to provide further information if desired.



Chief, SIGINT Branch

cc--Mr. Singel
General Kulpa
Col Kiefer
LtCol Hofmann
Mr. Murphy

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