DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

~~Fact~~

FOR GENERAL BERG

Returned in anticipation of Frank Rause visit. Suggest our position:

1. We are deeply concerned over the relaxations proposed in this paper
2. We have an OSD policy problem: our BIG BOSS will not buy disclosure or relaxation – witness his recent lone stand vs the intelligence whole world.
3. The problem is indeed difficult – we want to help Frank to help NASA.
4. Could we give him some ideas – notes – themes – on how NASA might indeed proceed without crews?

~~Fact~~

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MEMORANDUM

~~Scott~~

Up until now, DoD has been a policeman who doesn't want NASA to pass the intersection. We'd like to change the role — to show NASA how to get through. Is he interested?

5. If so, drop back in 10-14 days and we'll give him some ideas we've worked out.

Ben B, I'm just hung up on giving Frank a paper ... He will ~~tell~~ where he get it. I'd rather give him notes — or a briefing and let him make notes ~~Scott~~ -Ed

Dave

26 July 67

Very good Paul -

Frank has scrapped this paper and is really anxious to listen in a couple of weeks -

Work on it and get in touch with him -

Tess

RAND: Security & Space Reconnaissance
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TOP SECRET

May 9, 1967

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Security and Space Reconnaissance

1. This country needs a very critical review of our policy and security regulations related to space satellite systems. Recent and continuing developments in our manned and unmanned satellite technology including boosters, payloads, space vehicles, recovery and data handling now allows us to perform almost any earth oriented mission we wish to accomplish from space. NASA and DOD have been working exceedingly hard to design credible new satellite systems. Both agencies are evolving their satellites to a point where their future sophisticated system requirements appear in many cases to be identical. NASA is currently working to define the requirements and system parameters needed to establish the program plan that will meet the future needs of natural resources and astronomy missions. These two missions have many technology developments similar to those planned and needed for the future SAFSP/CIA missions.

2. Many statements are currently being made that tend to compromise the U.S. security position for space surveillance and reconnaissance, both for military and nonmilitary missions. Below are some typical recent examples:

a. President Johnson is reported to have disclosed in Tennessee that satellite reconnaissance may have lessened the guess-work regarding military capability of potential aggressors. See New York Times, 17 March; Washington Post, 18 March; and Washington Star, 17 March.

TOP SECRET

Handle via BYEMAN Control System

b. NASA has stated in official publications* that its postulated Observation Program in near earth orbits could see objects smaller than Soviet missiles. NASA stated that objects can be identified as small as two to ten feet by 1970.

c. Two specific statements below were made in the recent Air Force/Space Digest, May 1967:

- o Mr. Johnson said, "They let me know how many missiles the enemy has." He went on to say that, by providing detailed information on the armaments actually possessed by Communist nations, the satellites are taking the guesswork out of a President's most important decisions.
- o NASA explanations of its projected manned observation-satellite program make it clear that the U.S. can now "see," from orbital altitudes of 150 to 200 miles, objects that are considerably smaller than the Soviet missiles Mr. Johnson mentioned. Objects as small as three feet in diameter, such as garbage-can lids, probably are picked up on a routine basis.

3. Space reconnaissance has assisted the President and all of the Free World to maintain a balance of power and has minimized the threat of surprise attack by any nation which could plunge the world into another major war. Accepting this fact, it would appear that at least three specific approaches to our satellite reconnaissance security seem worthy of investigation. These approaches are listed below:

a. U.S. should hold to a very hard and extremely selfish position that space surveillance for military and nonmilitary uses should be conducted exclusively for the advantage they

*NASA CR 586 - Peaceful Uses of Earth Observation Spacecraft

offer to the U.S. The U.S. should refuse to take part in any world discussion that would bring any other Nation of the world up to the sophistication of our established overt and covert satellite capability.

b. The U.S. should officially state we plan to conduct space reconnaissance for both the military and nonmilitary missions. However, the U.S. would work closely and seek agreement with all of the Free World (especially with the under-developed nations) to assist them in the assessment and development of their natural resources. Specific use will be established for both spacecraft and aircraft reconnaissance where they can be economically and effectively deployed.

c. U.S. should plan a very careful series of releases designed to extend the existing gap or advantage we have over the Russians. The covert release plan should be based on a very thorough assessment of the competitive capability of the Russian Reconnaissance Satellites. Once the plan is established all Government Agencies should be forced to adhere. Control of the security plan should be placed in the hands of the ExCom.

4. Whichever approach proves desirable, it is suggested that the U.S. should reevaluate its current position and perhaps take a very practical and realistic approach to our reconnaissance policy perhaps even to the point of officially admitting that we have successfully conducted space reconnaissance and will continue to conduct space reconnaissance at ground resolutions of 3 feet to 10 feet. This would free-up much necessary data and satellite capability needed to successfully pursue our National Resources Satellite Program. The 3 foot or lower limit would be more than adequate for all of the current and planned NASA, Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior or Department of Commerce missions. Perhaps the 10 foot limit may well prove adequate for most of these nonmilitary missions.

5. There has been considerable work done in NASA to identify the useful parts of the spectrum and resolution required to conduct natural resources, weather, climate, and geodetic flights for all of the free nations of the world. These studies have continually run into the Intelligence Community's defined covert need to keep our capability and data secure. At the present time there is a study team in OST with selected access to three foot G and C Corona data whose objective is to define the data requirements for the Natural Resources Satellite Program. The selection of the proper operational mix of airplanes and satellite systems to perform these future missions should be determined following this effort. Many of the postulated missions and coverage requirements can best be obtained by aircraft properly stationed around the globe.

6. It is further suggested that any release of current intelligence information on film or tape should continue under the most careful control. Detailed statements that identify the state of our reconnaissance technology should be carefully controlled. Perhaps we can select and release our existing space reconnaissance capability to mislead the Russians and the Chinese. We could use the release of the three-foot capability to establish a very credible story that might well serve as cover for our current capability and future technology plans. The Russian higher resolution systems probably have not attained the disclosed 3 foot ground resolution. They probably have two systems that cover the range of 5 feet to 30 feet based on our most recent evaluations.

7. The proposed cover story could be based on the three foot resolution capability reportedly released by the President and would suggest that the U.S. needs no additional capability. For example, three to four-foot stereo coverage allows for the photo interpreter to determine whether a vehicle is a truck or a jeep, will let him distinguish between a

landing craft and small pleasure boat, and also identify the missiles or booster on the pad.

8. It would seem that the basic security problem lies in keeping covert the details and schedules of our sophistication, i.e.,:

a. The fact we will be conducting the most advanced search and surveillance missions employing the newly designed HEXAGON system with exceedingly wide stereo coverage at resolutions of 2.7 feet.

b. The fact we will be conducting manned and unmanned technical intelligence missions with the Dorian [redacted] system.

c. The fact that we are currently conducting technical intelligence missions with the 6[redacted] one foot) camera system.

d. The fact that the limit of the atmosphere appears to be [redacted] with a 50% probability [redacted].

9. As we perform search and surveillance or technical intelligence missions to determine the capability of the Chinese and Russians, we find we need both stereo and mono-photographic coverage and very high resolution [redacted] but of relatively small areas ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 miles) as well as less sophisticated resolution (2 ft. to 15 ft.), stereo photographic coverage of wider areas (50 to 150 miles) to determine Defense Condiction (DEFCON) or order of battle. Each of these two missions, however, requires a new or improved satellite spacecraft, camera, and data recovery subsystem. Both systems are under development through the Air Force SAFSP/MOL(D) Program and the joint SAFSP/Air Force and CIA(H) Program, respectively. These efforts must go forward rapidly to maximize our ability to make credible and timely decisions with the full knowledge of the Chinese/ Russian technology and order of battle deployment of forces.

Summary

1. President Johnson is reported to have disclosed that we have a three ft. satellite space reconnaissance capability which has provided detailed information on the communistic nations' armaments.

2. Space Reconnaissance is an instrument of peace which has assisted the President and the Free World to maintain a balance of power and has minimized the threat of surprise attack that could plunge the world into another major war.

3. Official U.S. disclosure of a 3 foot to 10 foot capability would probably improve our country's credibility gap.

4. The present security control is becoming more and more restrictive to our "Peaceful Uses of Space" Program.

5. Disclosing the 3 foot to 10 foot reconnaissance capability would probably be more than adequate to meet all of the current and future needs of the National Resources Satellite Program.

[redacted]

7. Careful official discussion of our 3 foot to 10 foot could mislead the Chinese and the Russians and might very well serve as a cover story for other developments planned by the United States Intelligence Community.

Recommendation

- o The Vice President should create an Ad Hoc Group at the highest level to carefully review the total political and technological problem and establish a firm usable National Security Policy for Military and Non-Military Space Reconnaissance and Surveillance Missions.

- The Ad Hoc group should include ExCom and selected representatives from State, Defense, NASA, Commerce, Agriculture, and the CIA.

- There should be a critical reassessment of the Sino/Soviet reconnaissance capability and political position for manned and unmanned satellite overflight which will be made available to the Ad Hoc Committee during their deliberations.