

~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

*PRO-F-3*

(31)

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

18 NOV 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR EXCOM MEMBERS

SUBJECT: Issues for 20 November Meeting

We have forwarded to you our financial report, issue papers, and the Director's Report. These contain a number of issues which will be treated on November 20.

However, there are a few issues which I believe are of over-riding importance and require special emphasis at the 20 November meeting. These have to do with the near-real-time system, crisis response, ocean surveillance, and an anti-satellite capability.

The near-real-time system activity is proceeding according to guidance received from ExCom over the last 16 months. Briefly, we are proving out the components and, in parallel, are doing systems studies to see that the various components can be put together into a coherent system. We are also pricing the various approaches. It seems to me that the issue facing the ExCom will be whether we are taking a deliberate enough approach to system development. Present planning is based on the assumption that we want to get an operating system as soon as possible, short of a crash program. If we really are sure that the requirement is well enough understood and we can afford it, our present course is the correct one. However, if we are not sure that we adequately understand the requirement, then I believe we ought to be more deliberate. The recent reconnaissance problems in the Mid-East and our inability to define what we would really want from a near-real-time system in such a situation leads me to think that our real needs are not yet clearly enough understood to justify a system go-ahead.

~~CORONA GAMBIT HEXAGON~~

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With respect to crisis response, we have recently gone through quite an exercise at the State Department (USIB) request on just what our systems will do in case of crisis. Here again, our thinking is not all that mature. Before we spend money to develop a crisis capability, I believe we should seriously consider expanding coverage with existing systems so that we always have a satellite on orbit with the possibility of bringing back a bucket within one day. By that means we will always have about one-day-old information, and, hence, we would be capable of targeting against crisis areas without worrying about loss of coverage of some other area.

If it is desired to have continuous coverage, this can now be achieved by launching six GAMBIT's and six HEXAGON's per year. This increase would add about \$111 million per year to the programs for the years involved. For your information, the present plans are to launch only four GAMBIT's and four HEXAGON's in FY 1973 and FY 1974. Any increase at this time would have budgetary impacts in FY 1971 and subsequent years. By 1975 we expect by extending the life of GAMBIT and HEXAGON to be able to get continuous coverage with four GAMBIT's and four HEXAGON's, although the present schedule reduces to three HEXAGON launches/year starting in FY 1975.

Another approach to crisis reconnaissance is to maintain a CORONA ready for launch on one-day notice. As presently scheduled, four CORONA's are considered to be backup to the HEXAGON, assuming a March 1971 HEXAGON first launch. If HEXAGON is reasonably successful, four CORONA's could be maintained for crisis response purposes. The CORONA's could be maintained at an R-25 status for about \$13 million per year, at R-15 status for about \$16.5 million per year, and at R-1 status for about \$20 million per year. The R-25 status could be maintained for FY 1972 within current launch budgets, but no provisions have been made for CORONA costs for FY 1973 and subsequent years.

The ocean surveillance issue is simply stated. The question is whether we should develop satellites for ocean surveillance or merely use existing NRO systems for this purpose. The Navy will probably prefer to have their own systems, and I see no reason why they should not have them except for the cost. It will no doubt be cheaper for us to expand

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our system than to have the Navy develop their own. The relative trade-offs in terms of utility and cost ought to be examined. However, we need to decide what philosophy we are following during our Friday discussions.

As for the anti-satellite, the Russians have again demonstrated this capability on a co-orbital basis. I believe that we need an inspection capability with a possible addition of a deterrent capability and that it should be funded through the regular Air Force budget.

*M.L.*

John L. McLucas

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