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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

April 22, 1971

Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Dave:

Last July I expressed to you some questions I had about the development of a near real-time (NRT) READOUT system within the National Reconnaissance Program. Simply put, the issues were with the appropriate scope of the NRT system in light of the capabilities of all other presently operating or feasible intelligence collectors; and with the possibility of a substantial overlap of the NRT system concept with other photographic surveillance capabilities of HEXAGON and GAMBIT.

I am impressed by the diligence of the NRO in pursuing in recent months both the "systems mix" concept for meeting requirements in a cost effective manner and the interim approaches to an NRT system for crisis purposes, which would be more readily available and less costly.

The Executive Committee of the NRP will, I know, soon be considering some of these interim approaches. I should like to emphasize the President's interest in an NRT or crisis capability system. It would be desirable if such a system could be operational at an early date and at a reasonable cost. This desirability derives both from responsiveness to the President's present needs, and perhaps equally importantly from the experience we will gain from such a system which provides frequent, regular access to areas of potential high interest and which can return the imagery product within a reasonably short period of time.

I am sure the Executive Committee will address the optimum realization of an NRT/crisis capability. In doing so, I hope that you will give serious consideration to the procurement within NRP resources of such a system so that it could have appreciable utility during the President's administration.

Sincerely,

(Signed) George P. Shultz

Director

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