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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

17 AUG 1971

APP

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Readout Satellites

Dr. McLucas has seen.
WM

The Executive Committee (ExCom) which supervises our National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) has been examining the question of how best to achieve a readout capability which would provide daily return of photographic coverage from space.

The Executive Committee agrees upon the development of the Electro-Optical Imaging System (EOI) as the most capable and most useful such system. With an orderly development program and funding limited to about [] per year, the EOI would be ready by about 1976. The committee concurs in this judgment and this is the course I strongly recommend.

There is disagreement among the members of the committee on how best to achieve an earlier capability. Dick Helms believes the EOI could be available earlier with a higher funding level as suggested in the Land panel. Mr. Packard does not believe this can be done and that you should not be asked to count on it. He points out that the Hexagon was two years behind schedule and even yet is not up to specification. Dr. David shares Mr. Packard's reservations about the possibility of having the EOI earlier than 1976 and further believes it would be better to start with the Film Read Out Gambit, FROG, and plan to bring in the EOI later. Mr. Helms believes there are better ways to obtain an earlier capability than with the FROG.

This disagreement among the members of the ExCom is generated by the great uncertainties about how best to proceed with an interim system under a budget limitation.

With the Hexagon now operational we have greatly increased photographic coverage above that which we had last year. There is, therefore, no compelling need to have a real time system by any specific date. I strongly recommend, therefore, that we proceed with the EOI on an orderly program which will provide a capability in 1976 or possibly somewhat earlier. I recommend against any of the other interim proposals considered by the ExCom.

Presidential Decision:

1. Approve EOI program with [] annual funding and 1976 operational date _____

2. Alternate program with earlier operational date is desired even if higher funding, an additional [] or more per year, is required _____
(In case Option 2 is selected, additional work is required to prepare appropriate options)

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