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TS) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

(H)

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

June 9, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Secretary Laird, June 8, 1971

Intelligence Budget Item. I showed him the plot of how we had brought down the total NRO budget over the last two years, but that we are in danger of the thing skyrocketing as we go for the [redacted] systems simultaneously. I told him I was concerned [redacted] comments to the effect that the President thought that intelligence was overinflated. I didn't know if these comments were true or not. He said that various people are quoting the President; specifically, Jim Schlesinger is saying that the President is unhappy and Senator Ellender has gotten the word and is quoting the President as saying that we are spending a billion dollars too much. Mel said he told Ellender that he did not know that the President said that, and he didn't think it was true. Anyway, Ellender ended up saying to Mel that he thinks we can save \$500 million out of the budget for intelligence. So in the face of this criticism and charges that we are spending too much on intelligence, the question is can we sustain the development costs of [redacted] of each other. Mel said he thought we ought to [redacted] the [redacted] but we ought to look again at proceeding with [redacted]. He said that what it offers in terms of near real-time capability above what [redacted] offers may not be worth the cost. I told him that I had discussed this with Dave and we had agreed to take it up at the next ExCom meeting.

DoD Organization. I reviewed with him what I call a personal item, but it began with a discussion of what he is going to do about a Deputy. He says he doesn't want to get specific about that until he gets approval from Congress. I said yes, but we need to know internally what it is we are talking about; for example, do you want to use someone who is in the Department now or do you want to recruit outside. He said, well, of course, we would like to use people inside in all cases where we can, but once in a while we should bring someone from outside. In

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other words, he did not answer directly. I asked whether he wanted a lawyer, an engineer, an accountant, or what to do that kind of work. Again he did not give me a direct answer. He says in effect, let's get the legislation approved because we don't want to have a specific man in mind at the time we get it approved and then let's look for people afterward. I told him I was interested in this because it might have some bearing on my own situation; either that I might be considered for the job or that someone whom he might take from inside would leave a job in which I might be interested. I said I felt that Dr. Seamans and Dr. Foster were two logical candidates if he wants to take someone from inside. He did not respond to this lead either, except to say that he was glad that Bob had agreed last week to stay on for the full term and six months beyond. I told him I was very happy with this because I felt that Bob and I had a very good relationship and that I couldn't imagine working with a person that I got along with better than I did with Bob. Nonetheless, this creates a problem for me as to whether I should stay on in this job which is a very low visibility job. He denied that this was so, but I think that he understands my point.

We then talked about the ASD(I) job and which way it is moving. He said that he is definitely going to get an ASD(I), but he doesn't want to pick one until after the Congress has had a chance to act on the legislation. If he went ahead and filled the job now it might compromise the willingness of Congress to create a new slot. I told him I understood this point. With respect to the duties of the ASD(I), I told him that there were two problems: 1) the ASD(I) job which Bob Froehlke has been doing is not all that big a job. He has not had the charter to do very much. He says that he thinks we are in much better shape than we were a couple of years ago on account of the activities which Bob Froehlke has set up, such as the Friday breakfast. He said that the NSA Director did not normally see the SecDef in the old days and he thought this was a great improvement. I told him that I thought we had made 100% improvement in the last two years through Bob Froehlke's efforts, but the question is what more can be done. I then showed him an outline of duties of an ASD(I) which I had prepared in rough draft, and he said when I got it cleaned up he would like to have a copy. He said this looks like a pretty good outline of the duties. 2) Another problem I cited was the relationship between the ExCom and the ASD(I). This is going to have to be dealt with and that I had made a proposal to Froehlke and Dave Packard



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which called for kicking the ExCom upstairs, putting them in the role of a Board of Directors but with more advisory than direct authority. This would give Helms the feeling that he was still participating in our operation and would put us in the position of drawing on his expertise. Since he is assumed to be the smartest man in town with respect to intelligence, we are bound to learn something by having him oversee our overall intelligence operation. I told him that Dave had not reacted negatively to this suggestion, although he had said that he didn't want the Director of the CIA to have too much control over DoD operations. I told him that I appreciated that point but that I felt the good outweighed the bad in such a proposal. I told him that Bob Froehke's reaction to this suggestion was that it was anathema to him. He does not like it at all. He says that the CIA has too much control over our operation now and we should move in the direction of giving them less, not more. Mel said that he is going to move fairly quickly on the ASD(I), but that he would not move without keeping us all advised on what's happening. I told him I wasn't trying to precipitate action, but I didn't want to be left behind and find that they had made decisions which I didn't know about. He said this was not a problem.

I then said I had a problem of knowing his evaluation of what I had been doing and whether there were other jobs that I was qualified for--that he was in a better position to know what I could do than I was. He said he thought that I could do almost anything, but we shouldn't make any moves that would upset the Air Force; therefore, we ought to think this through pretty carefully and we ought to talk over our moves with Bob Seamans and see what he has in mind with respect to running the NRO and getting an Under Secretary if any moves are going to be made. He said that he thought that Bob and I had a good relationship, that we served as good counterbalances for each other and so before we made any radical changes we ought to think through what the future situation is going to be. He said that the NRO is being run better than it ever has been before, that everybody in town says that it's never been operated so well, so he wants to preserve this kind of an operation rather than jeopardizing it. I told him I thought we covered the matters at hand pretty well.

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John L. McLucas

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