

~~TOP SECRET~~

DATE: 3 MAY

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APPROVAL _____
COMMENTS _____
COORDINATION _____
ACTION _____
INFORMATION _____

TICKLER _____
RETURN TO _____
FILE _____
SUSPENSE _____

'FACT OF' INPUT TO MR BUSH.

- GIVES NRD VIEWS OF DOWNGRAD-
ING OR DECLASSIFYING 'FACT OF'

[REDACTED]

Chas Cook.

Thanks for the effort but I
have decided not to send.

It is clear that we would not
be giving Bush anything new.

[REDACTED]

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SSO AND SPO HANDLING ONLY

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
29 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Classification of "Fact Of"

REFERENCE: Letter to the DCI, Mr. Colby, From Secretary of Defense,
Mr. Schlesinger, Dated 22 August 1974 (SecDef Contr No. X-2565)

With reference to the subject of the classification of the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance, currently being brought forward for USIB consideration, I would like to call your attention to the referenced letter. In essence, we still continue to believe that there would be little gain, and the possibility of great loss by declassifying at this time the fact that the United States conducts satellite reconnaissance. In addition, we do not see the need for pressure to make a change at this time. We recognize the present proposal is to reduce the classification from SECRET to CONFIDENTIAL; however, we question whether this caveat provides sufficient protection in view of the minimal personnel security standards required for CONFIDENTIAL clearance.

As Mr. Schlesinger pointed out, the degradation of the classification of the "fact of", "-----would lead to considerations of national sovereignty and U.N. discussions that could be harmful to our interests". Thus, as indicated before, we believe it is unwise to subject ourselves to such added risks and public discussion.

J. W. Plummer

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CLASSIFIED BY [REDACTED] FROM [REDACTED]
GENERAL OF [REDACTED] S OF [REDACTED]
EXECUTIVE OF [REDACTED] DATE [REDACTED]
COPY 282 DECLASSIFY ON [REDACTED] DET.

~~TOP SECRET~~

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PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE


OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

30 April 1976

NOTE FOR MR. PLUMMER

I have talked to Dr. Proctor on this subject. He tells me that Mr. Bush is now going to push for "Unclassified." Apparently Mr. Bush is trying hard to downgrade areas to gain credibility with Congress and be able to keep classified areas about which he feels more strongly.



~~TOP SECRET~~



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

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

30 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PLUMMER

SUBJECT: Classification of "Fact Of"


Forwarded for your signature is a proposed memorandum to Mr. Bush in response to Dr. Proctor's proposal to downgrade the "fact of" to the CONFIDENTIAL level.

Also enclosed are the Proctor draft memorandum (Tab A) and the letter from Dr. Schlesinger to Mr. Colby (Tab B) which is cited in the reply.



2 Attachments

1. Draft Memo
2. SecDef Memo, dtd 22 Aug 74

Action Officer: 

HANDLE VIA 

CLASSIFIED BY 
GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652 EXEMPTION CATE-
GORY S22 DECLASSIFY ON NWP DET.

~~TOP SECRET~~

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YES 889301-76
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EWProctor:sbr
6 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM : George Bush

SUBJECT : Modification of the Classification and
Dissemination Controls for the Products
of Reconnaissance Satellites

1. This memorandum requests that you authorize the Director of Central Intelligence to make certain modifications in the existing restrictions concerning access to the products of the US reconnaissance program. These changes are in response to one of the duties assigned to me by Executive Order 11905. Specifically, Section 3 (d)(1)(viii) states that the Director of Central Intelligence shall "establish a vigorous program to downgrade and declassify foreign intelligence information as appropriate and consistent with Executive Order No. 11652".

2. In 1960 soon after the US satellite reconnaissance program began, President Eisenhower ordered that all aspects of the program, even the fact of its existence, be classified TOP SECRET and be given

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additional access limitations. In 1973, President Nixon authorized the Director of Central Intelligence to make modifications in classification and access limitations regarding the products of the program; however, the President did require that the fact of the existence of the photographic reconnaissance program be classified at the SECRET level

3. It is common knowledge, both at home and abroad, that the United States Government conducts such a program. In these circumstances it has been argued that the fact of the program should not be classified at all. A primary reason for continuing some degree of classification is the concern that official public acknowledgment of the program will risk some degree of diplomatic and political reaction by some foreign governments, especially the USSR in connection with SALT. Because it is not the knowledge of the fact of the program but the official acknowledgment by the United States Government that would be disturbing, it would be appropriate to classify the fact of the program at the CONFIDENTIAL level in accordance with Executive Order 11652.

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4. Modifications should also be made in the dissemination controls for the photographic and signals intelligence products of reconnaissance satellites. These changes would facilitate the use of the less sensitive products, especially for tactical military purposes, and would ease the present restrictions on dissemination to certain allied governments. Deputy Secretary Ellsworth and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have advocated modifications along these lines. I can assure you that any changes that are made will be with due regard for my responsibility--as stated in Executive Order 11905, Section 3 (d)(1)(vii)--to "ensure that appropriate programs are developed which properly protect intelligence sources, methods and analytical procedures". It should be noted that while I am requesting authority to modify the restrictions on access to the products of reconnaissance satellites, I do not intend to change the classification or the system of controls presently applicable to the operational aspects of the satellite reconnaissance program.

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5. On this basis, I recommend that you authorize the
Director of Central Intelligence to:

- Classify as CONFIDENTIAL the fact that the
United States Government conducts a photographic
satellite reconnaissance program, and
- Implement a policy of reducing the dissemination
restrictions on the photographic and signals
intelligence products of our satellite reconnaissance
program in a way that will not jeopardize this
essential source of intelligence.

George Bush

The recommendations in Paragraph 5 are approved _____

Date: _____

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~~SECRET SENSITIVE~~

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

22 AUG 1974

A-6.0
Foot of

The Honorable William E. Colby
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Bill:

With reference to the question of declassification of the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance, I believe your memorandum lays out the pro and con arguments reasonably well. However, we continue to believe that there would be little gain, and the possibility of great loss by declassifying at this time the fact that the United States conducts satellite reconnaissance over the Soviet Union. In addition, we see no pressure for making a change at this time.

While there is obviously considerable public knowledge of the program, in our view the declassification and ultimate admission of the "fact of" would inevitably lead to erosion of the security of the program. Further, once the program is publicly admitted, the Soviet leadership could be subjected to different, largely unforeseeable, and possibly unfavorable pressures from our viewpoint. Finally, it is likely that declassification would lead to considerations of national sovereignty and U.N. discussions that could be harmful to our interests.

In view of the importance of this program to our Defense posture, we believe it unwise to subject ourselves to such added risks and public discussion. Maintaining the classification of the program provides the continuing option of a Presidential release and statement if future events make this advisable.

Sincerely,

James R. Schlesinger

Classified by ASD(1)
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652, EXEMPTION CATEGORY II
necessary or impossible to determine

ASD(1) 711-1111
~~SECRET SENSITIVE~~