

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TALENT-KEYHOLE~~



~~US~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

November 5, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. JOHN P. SHAW

SUBJECT: Comments on Draft Report of 156 Committee

Attached are both general and specific comments relating to the draft report of the 156 Committee dated October 26, 1971.

It is our understanding that there is no compulsion or pressure for the Administration to acknowledge the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance, which would appear to be a direct consequence of implementing the recommendations of the draft report. In view of the lack of rationale for changing the established national policy on disclosure, we do not concur in the recommendation to define national technical means of verification to include information-gathering satellites, and strongly urge that this approach be removed from further consideration at this time.



Lt Colonel, USAF  
Deputy Director for  
Plans and Policy  
NRO Staff

1 Attachment  
Comments

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CONT. # TCS-37598-71  
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PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES  
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COMMENTS ON DRAFT REPORT  
OF  
156 COMMITTEE

General Observations

The following comments are tempered by the fact that the National Reconnaissance Office is charged with the responsibility for performing satellite intelligence collection operations. Reconnaissance satellites are fragile, vulnerable vehicles and can be safely operated only in a permissive environment.

A decision to acknowledge reconnaissance from space-- which would be the case if the Government stated that national technical means of verification meant information-gathering satellites--is an irreversible acknowledgement. It cannot be retracted. In the face of possible strong adverse world opinion--perhaps domestic as well as foreign--there is no way of guaranteeing that the NRO can continue its collection operations. Albeit small, can we afford this risk?

It is recognized from the SALT conversations that the Soviets acknowledge the acceptability of satellite reconnaissance as a means of verification. On the other hand, the Soviet Union raised the question at the United Nations

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PAGE 1 OF 5 PAGES

this Fall about possible infringement upon national sovereignty of earth resources satellites. Could this not be a portent of future objections should space reconnaissance activities be acknowledged?

If national means are acknowledged to mean observation satellites, what other means--perhaps truly more sensitive--must be acknowledge or may otherwise be compromised?

Acknowledgement of the "fact of" leads to more questions; it does not follow that admitting the fact forestalls further questions.

Acknowledgement of the use of information-gathering satellites, without further detail could have side effects on the overt programs of NASA and NOAA, placing them in a position of suspicion.

For over a decade this nation has relied upon the products of reconnaissance satellites to provide strategic intelligence. It has not been necessary to acknowledge these activities publicly in the process of justifying national programs based upon the intelligence collected. It is not understood why the conclusion of a Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement should

necessarily cause us to acknowledge our means of verification, and it is considered that the draft report does not provide an adequate rationale for doing so.

Specific Comments

Page 2, last para. The boundaries of outer space have never been legally defined, and hence the interpretation of the legality of satellite reconnaissance operations with respect to national sovereignty is open to question. Many nations know what we are doing in space; to confront them openly by official acknowledgement could cause embarrassment to sovereign nations for which they might feel compelled to react, politically or physically.

Page 6, para (3). Unless observation satellites are specifically identified in the language of the agreement, the existence of a sanction under "generally recognized principles of international law" is seriously questioned.

Page 7, para (4). The need for special briefings to Allies to quell doubts is questioned. Nothing in the way of NRO activities is expected to change under a SAL agreement.

Page 8, para (5). The distinction between "means" and "capabilities" is subordinate to the more important issue of acknowledging the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance.

Page 9, second para. Automatic briefings for additional Congressmen are not believed to be desirable. The Chairmen of appropriate committees should have a voice in this--it is they who will win support for a SAL agreement, and they may wish to choose the recipients of briefings.

Page 10, second para. The necessity to define the means of verification is questioned.

Page 10, last para. This does in fact acknowledge satellite reconnaissance. The term "information-gathering satellites" may include other vehicles, but it in fact does include reconnaissance satellites.

Page 11, Recommendations.

Item (1). Concur with this recommendation, consistent with the comments above relating to the second paragraph on page 9.

Item (2). Concur, to the extent that such briefings are presently given.

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Item (3). Do not concur. Recommend that no further definition of "national technical means" be publicly stated.

Item (4). Concur.

Item (5). Concur, recognizing that this does not resolve the question of third country objections.

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PAGE 5 OF 5 PAGES

**A. Critical Objectives for Maximum Protection (Codeword  
Compartment Classification)**

1. **Maintain functional integrity and effectiveness of NRP's operation.**

**Protected Data:**

- a. **NRO identify, organization, mission and functions;**
- b. **NRP administration, budgeting, costs, planning, and procurement;**
- c. **NRP component facilities, locations, activities.**

2. **Avoid disclosure of fact and extent of CIA role in NRP**

3. **Avoid disclosure of technical composition and capabilities of NRP assets.**

**Protected Data:**

- a. **Objects detection capability (resolution)**
- b. **Objects coverage capability (scope and frequency of accesses, swath, capacity, constraints, buckets, duration)**
- c. **Assets inventory (number, types, functional characteristics)**
- d. **Assets acquisition (R&D, etc.)**

4. **Avoid disclosure of intelligence concepts for NRP operation.**

**Protected Data:**

- a. **Search/surveillance**
  - b. **Continuity of coverage**
-

- c. Guidance/targeting (USIB-COMIREX-NRO relations and channels)
  - d. Product handling/exploitation (NPIC--)
5. Avoid disclosure of intelligence value of/reliance on satellite imagery.
6. Avoid enhancing/provoking hostile foreign capabilities to deter/inhibit effective functioning of U. S. imagery satellite program.
- a. By Direct Action:
    - (1) USSR - Provoke\* technical or armed interdiction (interception/interference), threatened or actual!
    - (2) USSR/Chicom - Provoke\* official government politico-propaganda campaign denouncing, threatening, denigrating (a la U-2) U. S. overhead imagery satellite reconnaissance as "hostile act", espionage!
  - b. By Indirect Action:
    - (1) USSR/Chicom - Enhance/incite politico-propaganda campaign via Moscow/Peiping responsive but non-attributable assets and channels world-wide (e. g. [REDACTED] generating hostile public opinion against U. S. "spy" program.
    - (2) Hostile 3rd-Countries - Enhance/incite official government protests/threats (retaliation) by hostile regional/international blocs (unilateral or via UN) against U. S. "spy" program in violation of national sovereignty.

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\*"Provocation" defined as U. S. public disclosure and elaboration on capabilities to degree of critical embarrassment or national security threat to Moscow/Peiping regimes.



c.

Sensitive Data

- (1) See SALT Disclosure Category IIIA--attached.
- (2) Extent and detail of CIA role/involvement in imagery satellite program. (A2, above)
- (3) Intelligence collection capabilities of individual systems and overall program.
- (4) Degree to which covert intelligence program equals "national technical means."
- (5) Extent/degree of intell community reliance on satellite imagery as critical source (A5, above).

**B. Objectives for Maximum U. S. Government Classified Utilization (SECRET/CONFIDENTIAL)**

**1. U. S. Only (NOFORN)**

- a. U. S. Forces military planning
- b. U. S. Forces military MC&G
- c. U. S. classified ops support (DDP)
- d. U. S. classified civil uses [? Drug Control]

**2. Inter-Governmental (YESFORN)**

- a. Selective U. S. policy support  
(Diplomatic mission & Domestic)
- b. Joint military planning
- c. Joint military MC&G

**C. Objectives for Maximum Overt/Public Utility (UNCLASSIFIED)**

**1. Internationally sanctioned means of overt national policy implementation**

- a. SALT
  - b. MBFR
  - c. Suez Cease Fire agreement
  - d. Crisis management (e. g. , India-Pak, Cyprus, etc.)
-

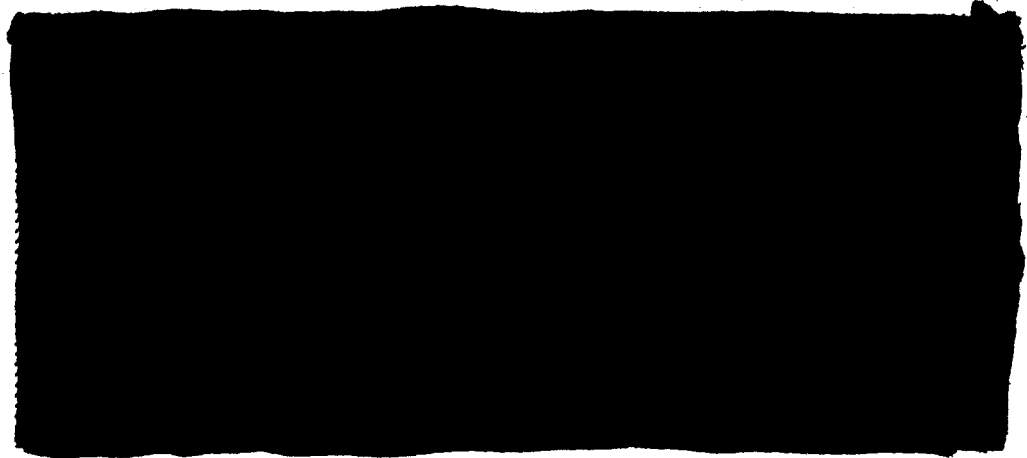
2. Domestic Civil Usage

- a. Earth Resources
- b. Environment Controls
- c. Urban Development
- d. Economic Development Planning
- e. MC&G (USGS)
- f. Disaster Relief
- g. Drug Control

3. International Civil Usage

- a. Earth Resources. & Science
- b. Economic Development
- c. Disaster Relief
- d. MC&G
- e. ? Drug Control ?

D. Facts of Official/Public Record



## LEVELS OF SALT DISCLOSURE

### Category I -- (Generalized Reference)

- A. ALLUSION: Publicly released SALT treaty text will include a verification article stipulating that -

Verification = reliance on and use of  
available "national technical means."

- B. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: U. S. official, public acknowledgement would follow that -

National Technical Means = Imagery Satellite  
(AKA observation/information gathering satellites)

- C. ASSERTION: Administration spokesmen will publicly state that -

"After exhaustive study, the U. S. Government has concluded that national technical means (i. e., inter alia imagery satellites) would be able adequately to monitor compliance with SALT agreements."

No comment would be made in regard to capabilities of satellites other than to say something along the lines that:

"The U. S. Government has conducted exhaustive studies concerning the ability of our national technical assets and it is convinced that such national technical means will be able to provide adequate assessment of compliance or non-compliance."

Officials would further state: "Such means operate in accordance with generally recognized principles of international law, outside the national territory of the other Party."

Officials could further publicly state that: "It is in the best interests of a successful SALT arrangement that no further details be given in public about the characteristics of our 'national technical means' since the knowledge of such details can only serve to reduce the confidence with which we can assure our verification of compliance."

Category II -- (National Data/Samples)

A. PERSUASION/JUSTIFICATION: To answer-- for the benefit of public Congressional hearings, the press, and the public--questions that may arise concerning the character and effectiveness of "national technical means", U. S. officials would be allowed to publicly say "something" about the characteristics of our observation satellites--

according to "some formula or guideline" which would outline disclosure steps that could be taken and the risks involved in each.

B. ASSURANCE: "There will be clear need, once SALT concluded with Soviets and made public, for appropriate consultation with Congress ~~and on~~ different scale than heretofore" in order to ensure confidence in verification capabilities. To convince key members of Congress of our ability to monitor the SALT agreement by sole reliance on national technical means there would be:

"Disclosure to key members of Congress and the appropriate committees in executive session sufficient details about satellite gathering intelligence to persuade them that the agreements can be adequately monitored."

"In order to ensure confidence in out capability to verify a SALT, CIA should plan for, and conduct, briefings on these capabilities in executive session of Congressional Committees directly concerned with a SALT. Implementation would be coordinated with WH, State, ACDA, DoD and JCS. "

**NOTE: "What" individual Congressman and "what" committees that would be so briefed on intelligence collection capabilities is not established. We would:**

**"Look to the Congressional leadership to advise us" on this.**

**SECRET consultations on SALT following publication with U. S. allies (particularly [redacted] can anticipate detail on following issues:**

**adequacy of relying "on" national technical means in verifying SALT;**

**technical capabilities of U. S. observation satellites.**

**[? CIA briefings?]**

**Category III--(Complete Descriptive Detail on Capabilities and Organization)**

**A. CONVICTION:**

**"National Technical Means (NTM)" = National Satellite Surveillance Program = National Reconnaissance Program(NRP)**

**1. Organization/Responsibility**

- **Who has custody of the NTM/NRP and how does it operate?.**
- **What and where are the NTM/NRP facilities.**
- **What and how many are the NTM/NRP assets (Inventory)?**
- **How much does the NTM/NRP program cost? Who's budget?**
- **What else has, does, and will go on in the NTM/NRP beyond SALT monitoring?**
- **Who will really control the NTM/NRP and certify SALT verification--President? State? Dod (oh!ho!)? CIA /Dreadful! "Fox guarding chicken-coop"??**

**2. Capabilities**

- **Types and general capabilities of assets.**
- **Sample products (show-and-tell).**
- **Samples of past accomplishments (e. g. , case history of selected major imagery coups on Soviet strategic weapons developments and deployment.**
- **Etc.**



**B. CERTIFIED CREDIBILITY/Proof Positive--(Complete Demonstrative Detail on Applied Intelligence Techniques and Scope of Program and Vehicles)**

**1. Frequency and scope of access to SALT targets.**

- Days on orbit
- Access per vehicle type per mission to USSR relative to total orbital characteristics (World-wide collection capability).
- How many of what seen how often.
- What seen (detail/resolution).
- Search-surveillance/continuity of coverage concepts.

**2. Intelligence techniques for read-out, targeting, coverage accounting, etc.**