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

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PACKARD

SUBJECT: General Bennett's Proposal on Decontrol and
Downgrading of Satellite Photography

You have asked for my comments on the subject proposal.

While I recognize the need to derive a maximum utiliza-
tion of the products of satellite photography, I am concerned,
at this particular time that the advantages to be gained in
the acknowledgement of the "fact of" satellite reconnaissance
at the SECRET level are at the very best extremely minimal.

We are presently engaged in, what we hope to be,
substantive negotiations of a SALT. We have entered these
negotiations with the objective of maintaining the present
tacit acceptance by the Soviets of our satellite reconnais-
sance activities. The Soviets have overtly described to us
their nervousness and concern about any action on either
their or our part which might jeopardize this present tacit
acceptance.

Our position in these negotiations is based essentially
on the guidance that, except for those limitations clearly
requiring verification through on-site inspection, we would
rely to the maximum extent necessary on verification by
"national means." Our delegation has been instructed,
generally, to offer no further definition or description
of what these means include.

A disclosure of the "fact of" U.S. satellite reconnais-
sance at the SECRET level, outside a compartmented control
system could have seriously damaging effects on the conduct
of these negotiations or could render any resulting agreement
completely unacceptable.

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I believe it prudent to at least delay the discussion
of General Bennett's proposal until we can see more clearly
the progress of the SALT talks and any advantages which
might be gained in the surfacing of the "fact of" our
activities.

John L. McLucas

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