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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

18 November 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Summary of Space Policy Committee Meeting

Secretary Sisco opened the meeting by viewing the Committee's activities as potentially very interesting and challenging. He asked for comments around the table as to the goals which were perceived by the members.

Mr. Plummer indicated that the reconnaissance satellites constituted a vital system and that we could lose our ability to conduct reconnaissance from space very quickly. We all need to understand this aspect in connection with the relationships with the civil space program. He also indicated that we believed strongly that a reverification of national policy was in order and that we had been instrumental in the establishment of the Space Policy Committee.

Mr. Sisco gave his interpretation of the United Nations activities by saying that the discussions have been very realistic on the whole and not interfering to U.S. activities. He believes that the education process at the United Nations is going very well.

Dr. Fletcher suggested that the DOD and NASA were working well together and believes that the policy group could determine what the needs of the civil versus the military are and said that imagery is not important. Scientific data causes problems. He suggested that we review the bidding first and not get on with the issues until the principals understand present policy. He also stated that in his opinion NASA and DOD are not too far apart.

Dr. Wade stated that the issues appear to be the same they always have been but the balance of power vis-a-vis the Soviet Union has changed thus making the fragility of the reconnaissance satellites even more significant.

Mr. Duckett said that there was a critical point deal with foreign policy value of the intelligence product and that

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the intelligence product is a measurable one. He believes that the committee must examine this aspect. Mr. Plummer followed up on this statement by saying that we should be cautious in giving data to others especially those militarily useful data collected by civilian satellites.

Dr. White felt that the current policies are good and that the Congress is in favor of the current policies. He wants the committee to get on with the issues and be specific so that we can solve the points at issue.

Dr. Fletcher asked why should we withhold data from the civil program. He said that although we have problems with data such as gravity anomalies, the LANDSAT program has been extremely popular and no one seems to be objecting to it. Mr. Duckett indicated that the Chinese have been purchasing a great deal of LANDSAT photography. Mr. Sisco asked what the return was for America and where is the grey area between the quality of the military and civilian programs. Dr. Fletcher responded by saying that some would like imagery less than five meters. NASA believes that ten meters quality is the optimum and there is no known foreign interest in obtaining better quality.

Mr. Katz suggested that all is not well in the United Nations and that resolution is not a problem but national privacy is. He noted that there were many vested interest groups at the table and that we must trade off viability of continuing programs versus distribution of the information. He stated that secret satellites are vulnerable and that tacit acceptance as we know it today is a continuing problem. He indicated also a concern about the irreplaceability of reconnaissance satellites and cautioned the committee to be careful in addressing the secret uses of openly acquired economic data. He also cited the point that if the reconnaissance satellites blatantly collected information then different perceptions would be evident as opposed to the favorable environment the reconnaissance satellites currently enjoy.

Mr. Sisco pointed out that aerial reconnaissance of the Sinai, which is permissible today, would not have been several years ago. Dr. Fletcher added to this by saying that he would like to optimize civil overflight of foreign nations in order to solidify the overflight principle by satellites.

Mr. Ogilvie stated that OMB had an unusual perspective and mixed feelings because of their interests in both the

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civil and the military programs from a resource viewpoint. He expressed a need to get clear issues defined and begin to work on these issues. Mr. Sisco amplified this by saying that we did need a feel for the issues and that Mr. Sloss' status report would be a good basis.

Dr. Weiss expressed the White House's interest in trading off fragility versus economic use. He indicated a problem with the hypothetical civilian pay-off versus a tangible fragility of the reconnaissance systems.

Mr. Drew indicated that we should view a productive use of the military systems and reassess the boundaries in order to get more product into the civil sector.

Dr. Elliott explained the President's desire which is to focus on space policy in order to avoid ad hoc decisions. He pointed out the dilemma created by the present "fact of" policy with respect to the charter of the civil users panel. He mentioned several other problems including the GEOS 3-SEASAT problem, whether NASA should do classified work and whether or not we should carry two space budgets or merge into a single space system. When Mr. Sisco asked what Dr. Elliott's opinion was of the latter, he responded by saying that he felt that the space systems were so different that no efficiency would be gained. Dr. Elliott closed by saying that he disagreed with the fragility issue in connection with international opposition. He said that the U.S. has no alternative but to proceed with the operation of the reconnaissance program under any circumstances. Mr. Sisco asked if there was a domestic fragility. Dr. Fletcher and Mr. Duckett commented on Congressional attitudes which pointed out that there were differences of opinion on the Hill as to the direction civil earth observation should take.

Mr. Plummer reiterated his point on fragility and cited the technical problems associated with countering the electronic satellites in particular. He added that the near-real-time system would add a new dimension and perhaps open up the anti-satellite question again in connection with tactical support.

Mr. Sisco asked if we had not taken a defensive approach over the years in protecting the reconnaissance satellite environment. Dr. Fletcher said that we could, through the committee, easily create a problem if we are not careful and urged that we should not rock the boat. Mr. Sisco said that we should be very cautious in that he does not see any overriding foreign policy decision and wants no decisive change. The conservative approach has blunted the need for foreign policy decisions.

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Dr. Fletcher suggested that we review the policy environment first rather than attack issues. Mr. Sisco suggested that we could do both at the same time. He has expressed a fear of delaying the process. Dr. Fletcher said that he felt the committee would bog down if issues were addressed. Mr. Ogilvie supported Mr. Sisco's suggestion and General Kearney suggested that selected issues be addressed. Dr. Elliott felt that the existent policy is well understood by most of the people working this problem and that we should not attack the issues one at a time. Dr. Fletcher criticized the existing list of issues by saying these are not policy issues but management issues. Dr. Wade expressed the idea that the policy issues should be framed by the committee and not the working group. Mr. Plummer and Dr. Fletcher both indicated that we ought to go back to the 1966 framework and use that as a baseline and home in more on the issues that were suggested in the Terms of Reference attached to the Clements' memo. Mr. Sisco still desired an integrated approach in one piece of paper. Mr. Sloss suggested that the backgrounder which has been started by the working group should be completed and in addition we ought to formulate an outline stating various issues for the working group to submit to the principal group. Mr. Sisco closed the discussion by suggesting that the members ought to take a liberal approach in identifying issues.

In summary, the meeting served to clarify various positions and importantly a notion of caution was introduced in treating change to policy as it affects the reconnaissance program.

  
HAROLD S. COYLE, JR.  
Lt Colonel, USAF  
Deputy Director for  
Plans and Policy

1 Attachment  
List of Attendees

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LIST OF ATTENDEES

Mr. Sisco	State
Mr. Plummer	NRO
Dr. Fletcher	NASA
Mr. Ogilvie	OMB
Mr. Duckett	CIA
Mr. Katz	ACDA
Dr. Elliott	NSC
Dr. Wade	OSD
Mr. Drew	OST
Dr. Weiss	CIEP
Mr. Radlinski	Int
Gen Kearney	JCS
Dr. White	NOAA



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