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DRAFT  
Col Bradburn  
10 March 1971

## ELINT SATELLITE POLICY STATEMENT

1. There are two basic approaches to tactical application of SIGINT satellites:

a. The first approach (special-purpose) is to provide satellite-to-ground or satellite-to-ship communications direct to the user. This approach provides quick response from time of observation to availability of output to the ground on shipborne user facility. The satellite contains data compression capabilities to simplify the ground facility requirements.

b. The second approach (general-purpose) is to use existing satellite-to-ground facilities (e.g., SCF network), existing data processing facilities (e.g., [redacted] existing communications (e.g., Criticom circuits), and existing satellites (URSALA, [redacted] and POPPY). Reporting times of [redacted] are available now (TRIPOS/SOUSEA), improving to [redacted] with URSALA [redacted]

2. There are fairly strong arguments favoring the general-purpose plan.

a. The special-purpose approach implies development of a family or families of low-altitude satellites more complicated than currently planned, and the procurement of ground terminal equipment and at

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least some machine processing equipment for each intended user station.

b. The general-purpose plan is available for exploitation now. The service user need only have secure communications typical of any field army, numbered air force, or numbered fleet.

c. Since no capital investment is required by the using service, this plan facilitates the experimental use of satellite-derived data in addition to other collection capabilities so that the services (Army, Navy, and Air Force) can determine what reallocation of organic resources may become possible. For example, the Navy may find that Elint over wide ocean areas once or twice a day will satisfy search requirements now being met by PV aircraft; the PV aircraft, freed from search, would then be available for specific identification of close-in tactical targets of approximately known location. Further, if more frequent access is needed, additional satellites can be added at very low cost; such additions will enhance the reliability and adaptability of the over-all system and will operate to the advantage of all users.

PROPOSITIONS: On the basis of the above discussion, the following statement of policy is recommended:

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1. The needs of the military services for satellite-collected Elint will be met through tasking of NRP satellites and reporting of signals of interest to the receiving facility designated by the requesting military service (e.g., Fleet Ocean Surveillance Information Facility, if so requested by the Navy).
2. The NRP SIGINT satellite programs will be augmented as necessary to provide the appropriate frequency of access to geographic areas of interest.

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