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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

19 September 1967

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The Honorable Alexander Flax  
Director, National Reconnaissance Office  
Department of Defense  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Al:

On 23 February 1967 you forwarded to me a report prepared by a group convened under your auspices to study and recommend security criteria for NRP equipment which might be made available to NASA. This report was undertaken in response to Recommendation #7 of the NSAM 156 Ad Hoc Committee's report of 11 July 1966 and you will recall that I delayed taking action with respect to the report of your group because of possible conflict with a proposed NASA program to use a GAMBIT camera in earth orbit. In light of your letter of 22 August 1967 advising of NASA's action to terminate this particular program, I hereby approve the findings and recommendations of the report transmitted by your letter of 23 February 1967 and believe that this report should be used as a basis for NRO dealings with NASA on equipment and technology. I am sending a copy of the report to the Chairman of the NSAM 156 Ad Hoc Committee and to each member.

Sincerely,

*Dick*

Richard Helms  
Director

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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The Honorable Foy D. Kohler  
Deputy Under Secretary of State  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Foy:

Recommendation #7 of the NSAM 156 Ad Hoc Committee report of 11 July 1966 recommended that: "The Director of Central Intelligence, in consultation with the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office, should review and establish appropriate security restrictions on cameras and other sensing apparatus and equipment which can be made available for NASA's program of non-military applications of satellite earth-sensing. It is recognized that substantial compartmentalization will probably have to remain, but the non-military programs should be enabled to profit from relevant achievements of the military program to the extent feasible." In response to this recommendation a small group of experts was convened by Dr. Flax and has completed a report containing findings and recommendations which I have approved. I am attaching a copy of this report and expect that it will be used as a basis for NRO dealings with NASA on equipment and technology in line with Recommendation #7 noted above.

Cordially,

[s] Richard Helms

Richard Helms  
Director

Attachment: BYE #52042-67

cc: Dr. Seamans, NASA w/att, cy 1, Series B  
Mr. Warnke, DOD w/att, cy 2, Series B  
Dr. Flax, NRO w/o att  
Mr. Fisher, ACDA w/att, cy 3, Series B  
Mr. Sheldon, CIA w/o att  
Mr. Keeny, White House w/att, cy 4, Series B  
Mr. Johnson, White House w/att, cy 5, Series B  
Mr. Welsh, NASC w/att, cy 6, Series B

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON 20330

DORIAN



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

25 October 1967



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MEMORANDUM FOR DR. FLAX

SUBJECT: Project ARGO

Recently, while briefing various Dorian-cleared Army representatives on MOL, the subject of Project ARGO arose (because of my prior involvement with the Army Engineers) and I was offered a status report on its progress to date. I visited Autometrics for that purpose on October 16. There follow some impressions from my rather brief exposure to this undertaking.

As you probably know, a team of eleven scientist/engineers from Commerce, Agriculture, Interior, and AID (headed up by Mr. Cox from AID) is conducting this analysis/study. The effort got underway in July with an orientation course at NPIC. Apparently, they started out to analyze a rather sizable area in central South America, quickly concluded that was too huge a task, and focused in on three representative smaller areas (near La Paz; in northeastern Bolivia; and near Montevideo). They have been working mostly with KH-5 and KH-4 material, supplemented by KH-7 and its index camera. I understood they will receive some material from the KH-8 and its index camera in the near future.

Most of the effort to date appears to have been spent in PI-type orientation -- by NPIC, Autometrics, and self-acquired -- and in preparing the basic foundations for their analyses (i.e., detailed overlays of topography, water networks, meteorology patterns, transportation, population centers, etc.). Perhaps more analysis has been done to date than was my impression, as several scientist/engineers did give some good examples (re farmable land, water flow, etc.) of what can be learned from TK photography. In any event, the group as a whole now appears to be moving rapidly in the analysis process.

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Mr. Cox made an interesting observation in his introductory/background remarks. He pointed out that the group, upon initial exposure to TK material, had almost unlimited enthusiasm for its potential. Shortly thereafter, however, upon closer examination, each individual's enthusiasm took a sharp nose-dive when he discovered that there was a great deal of information which could not be easily derived from the material. Subsequently, there apparently has been a slow build-up in enthusiasm (and morale) as each person spent more time analyzing.

In an informal session with Mr. Cox and several others, I cautioned them against becoming so involved in analyzing these three particular areas that they overlooked the main point, which -- in my opinion -- was analyzing the usefulness of this material. In this regard, I suggested they also try to arrive at some resolution "plateau" which provides a useful baseline for all areas, and which could be supplemented by higher-resolution photography for particular areas. I also suggested they look at obliquity in this same respect.

One particular geographical area (I believe it was similar to a salt flat or dry lake bed) clearly indicated a need for color photography -- at least, in certain situations. This information had only been derived from the black and white photography because Mr. Cox had seen these areas during his AID tours in South America.

I understand the next phase of their analyses involves test areas in the US and that various material (color, IR, etc.) will be available to the group.

I note that this group is made up strictly of Government employees. It seems to me that at some future date the purely scientific (educational institution) and profit organization inputs should be obtained. In particular, with regard to the latter, someone from a large A&E organization (like Sverdup & Parcel who are world-wide and multi-functional in nature), and perhaps also from one of the oil industry

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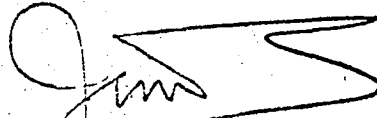
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"giants", should be cleared and given the task of analyzing the worth of this material from their viewpoints.

I have passed along the above and other comments to Dr. Steininger. No action on your part is recommended at this point in time.



JAMES T. STEWART  
Major General, USAF  
Vice Director, MOL Program

*The purpose of this whole exercise is to give Gov't agencies knowledge of what is available so they can place NSA exercises in perspective.*

*JS*

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