

January 21, 1976

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B/C 1400039249

Dear Mr. Colby:

Yesterday I was privileged to view the exhibit of the world's first successful reconnaissance satellite at your National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC). Authorization for my Assistant Director, F.C. Durant, III, and me to see this exhibit was secured through your **[REDACTED]** DD/S&T.

At the National Air and Space Museum we have gathered together for exhibit the largest collection of scientific and applications satellites ever assembled. The one mission application satellite is the world's first -- the reconnaissance satellite.

We recognize that there have long been problems associated with national security in revealing the state-of-the-art of the first reconnaissance satellite system. At the same time we presume that technical advancements in follow-on systems will eventually permit declassification of the major details of the system which became operational in 1960.

If this time is now we should like to request title to those artifacts and photographs in the NPIC exhibit which might be released.

Our interest is in preserving such artifacts for posterity and for public exhibit. We believe that the operational techniques and advancements in technology incorporated in this reconnaissance satellite system would make an exhibit of high public interest. We hope that approval may be granted to declassify this hardware, and to transfer title of this exhibit to the National Air and Space Museum.

Honorable William E. Colby
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Declassified and Released by the NRO

In Accordance with E.O. 12958

on NOV 26 1997