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

THE NRO STAFF

September 27, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. FLAX

SUBJECT: ACDA Proposed Guidance on the Handling of Satellite
Reconnaissance Policy with Regard to the Strategic
Missile Talks

Attached is a copy of the ACDA's proposed guidance paper, on
the above subject, which Mr. Foster has forwarded to the Executive
Committee of the Committee of Principals for consideration.

We are reviewing the paper and will provide our comments for
your use, as appropriate, in discussing the subject with Mr. Nitze.

William R. Yost
WILLIAM R. YOST
Lt Colonel, USAF

*B. Big
Ingram*

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UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
WASHINGTON



September 19, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE
OF PRINCIPALS

SUBJECT: Strategic Missile Talks; Related Aspects of
Satellite Reconnaissance Disclosure Policy

Transmitted herewith for your consideration is a Strategic Missile Talks paper containing proposed guidance on handling certain aspects of the U.S. satellite reconnaissance disclosure policy.

The NSAM 156 Committee reviewed this subject at its meeting on September 16, 1968 and agreed that it should be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee of the Committee of Principals.

Your approval of these guidelines will be requested at a future meeting of the Executive Committee of the Committee of Principals.

William C. Foster

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~~TOP SECRET~~STRATEGIC MISSILE TALKSRELATED ASPECTS OF SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE DISCLOSURE POLICYDISCUSSION

Introduction: The approved United States position for negotiations with the Soviets on limiting strategic arms includes the following provision:

"VIII. VERIFICATION

"The limitations described in paragraphs I through V are proposed to be verified by external [national] means."

In other documents detailing the United States negotiating position, it is provided that efforts be made to obtain Soviet assent to "supplementary means" (i.e., limited on-site inspections) of verification. However, given the traditional Soviet opposition to on-site inspections, the United States must be prepared -- and is prepared -- to rely exclusively on national means of verification if there is to be an agreement in the vital field of strategic arms limitations.

It is only the development of such means which has made a realistic consideration of a limitation on strategic arms possible. Aside from likely Soviet objections to provision for on-site inspections, national means of verification, in particular

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observation satellites, provide the only feasible means of policing an agreement of the type and scope the United States has in mind.

At the same time, it is vital to United States security interests to preserve the full integrity of its intelligence operations, particularly, in this instance, the unimpeded operation of observation satellites. The unique value of observation and other intelligence-gathering satellites in this regard has been amply demonstrated in recent years, and needs no further elaboration.

The United States Government has established policy and information guidelines which, have effectively accomplished this purpose. However, it is evident that these guidelines will have to be adjusted if the United States is to pursue the significant undertaking of reaching an agreement on limiting strategic missiles.

Not obvious that it will not be any benefit
 We will have to discuss "national means of verification" with the Soviets. Congress and our Allies will have to be convinced that reliance on such means can effectively verify an agreement and thus safeguard Western security interests. And the American public and press will have to be given similar, though less explicit, assurances.

This paper does not address the question of downgrading the classification, or declassifying altogether, certain information relating to our reconnaissance satellite program -- i.e., the simple fact that the United States conducts such operations.

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POSITION

Negotiations with the USSR. One over-riding tactical consideration has guided the United States in regard to reconnaissance satellites: to avoid an open confrontation with the Soviets over this issue. It has been reasoned that if the Soviets, who have knowledge of our satellite operations, were not forced publicly to challenge these operations, they would be more inclined tacitly to accept them.

This has so far proven to be the case. The danger of a confrontation has also been diminished by the development by the Soviets of their own, extensive, observation satellite program.

Even so, it is still sound policy to avoid a confrontation. There is some evidence that the planned arms control talks, while they will involve an exchange of views, will not undercut this policy; indeed, they could enhance the security of the United States information-gathering satellite program.

In the first instance, the United States has communicated to the Soviets its intention to place "maximum reliance on national means of verification." The Soviets must be fully aware of the meaning of this phrase, and have given no indication that they object to the proposition. Secondly, the talks, if they result in an agreement, would have the effect of formalizing Soviet acceptance of the US program (and vice versa). No agreement would be possible without such acceptance.

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In keeping with these considerations, the Delegation is authorized, at a time of its choosing, to indicate to the Soviets that the term, "national means of verification," includes the use of "information-gathering satellites". No further effort should be made to define this term without instructions from Washington.

In the course of the talks, the Delegation should establish a negotiating history to the effect that our willingness to conclude an agreement of this scope with maximum reliance on national means of verification is based on the assumption that one side will not impede the operation of the other's information-gathering satellites.

Finally, in discussing the withdrawal article, the Delegation should point out that any action by one party which interferes significantly with the other's verification capability or otherwise affects the capability of the other party to verify compliance with the agreement would constitute one of the grounds for withdrawal.

While all of these points should be made in the course of discussions, the Delegation should bear in mind the desirability of avoiding an unnecessary confrontation and should proceed with appropriate caution. Further, the Delegation should avoid revealing the effectiveness of our satellite intelligence systems. This applies both to discussion of verification per se as well as to the elaboration of our proposal which, in certain aspects,

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could reveal indirectly more than we would wish to regarding our capabilities. The matter will be blurred somewhat by the introduction of proposals for on-site inspection in regard to certain gray areas. But this is a problem to which the Delegation will have to give careful attention. The best approach would be: (1) confine discussion of our positive capabilities for national verification to generalities; and (2) limit discussion of details concerning our verification capabilities to those areas of the proposed agreement where there is some doubt as to full effectiveness of national means and concerning which we might want to propose supplementary means of verification.

Consultation. It will be important to assure our most important Allies (NATO members, Japan) that the proposal we are advancing will protect United States and Allied security interests, in regard to both the substance of the proposal and the capability to verify effectively adherence to an agreement through national means. In consultation with our Allies within the NAC, we should at least not initially volunteer an explanation of the meaning of "national means of verification" (this should be self-evident to our Allies). We should also not initially indicate our willingness to accept, as a fall-back position, exclusive reliance on such means. However, we should brief the heads of selected NATO governments concerning our means and capability of verifying the arms limitation agreement which we have in mind.

The same consideration applies to consultation with selected

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members of Congress, and even more so. It will be important to hold these consultation at an early date, and on a more candid basis than with our Allies. Otherwise the proposed talks could create misunderstanding and possible controversy. The briefing on our general approach to, and the problem of, verification should be restricted to a limited number of key members of Congress, and should take place within the context of a general discussion of our arms control proposal. The briefing could include a general review of the findings of SNIE 11-13-68. These members of Congress should be advised not to reveal publicly our approach to verification until a clearer picture of Soviet attitudes emerges from the talks.

The precise timing and further details regarding the scope of these consultations are matters to be decided by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, Director of CIA, and Director of ACDA.

Statements to the Press and the Public. Although the likelihood of publicly provoking the Soviets into a confrontation over the operation of observation satellites may diminish once talks begin, it would still be desirable to maintain initially a discreet silence in public on this subject. The problem of verification will be the object of secret negotiations for some time to come, and, as indicated above, we will want to sound out Soviet attitudes.

Accordingly, we initially should not volunteer statements to the press concerning means of verification of a strategic

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arms limitation agreement. Our standard response to press inquiries, once the talks begin, should be that "we are, of course, aware of the need to have adequate means of verifying compliance with such an agreement."

Eventually, however, information concerning our negotiating position will probably leak to the press. At this stage, we should be ready to acknowledge that "the United States is prepared to place maximum reliance on national means of verification." If asked by journalists to explain this term, press spokesmen may, on a background basis, say that the newsmen are free to draw their own conclusions.

Any public statements by United States officials on this subject should follow the same guidelines set forth above for the press.

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE
COMMITTEE OF PRINCIPALS

(1) The Committee of Principals serves as the inter-agency advisory group to the President and, as required, the National Security Council on policy matters relating to arms control and disarmament, including a nuclear test ban.

(2) The Secretary of State will continue to serve as Chairman. The Director, U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency will serve as Vice Chairman and will preside in the Secretary of State's absence. Meetings of the Committee will be held when called by the President, the Secretary of State, or the Director, U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Members may suggest to the Secretary of State or the Director of ACDA that a meeting be called and list subjects for consideration. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency will furnish staff support to the Committee, including distribution of substantive papers, agendas, records of action of meetings, and preparation of lists of officials invited to attend.

(3) The following are regular members of the Committee:

The Secretary of State, Chairman
The Director, ACDA, Vice Chairman
The Secretary of Defense
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Chairman, Atomic Energy Committee
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Special Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The Special Assistant to the President for
Science and Technology

When matters of concern to their agencies are scheduled, the following officials will be invited:

The Director, U. S. Information Agency
The Administrator, National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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As needed, other departmental or agency heads, or their designees, may be invited to attend if their presence is deemed necessary.

(4) The Committee will attempt to reach agreements through consensus of opinion. As necessary, divergent views will be submitted to the President for resolution either directly or through the National Security Council.

(5) As appropriate, the President may from time to time meet with the Committee.

April _____, 1963
NSC Action _____.

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE OF PRINCIPALS

The Vice President

The Secretary of State (Chairman)

The Secretary of Defense

The Director of the United States Arms Control
and Disarmament Agency

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Special Assistant to the President for Science
and Technology

The Special Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

The Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission

The Director of Central Intelligence

The Director of the United States Information Agency

The Administrator of the National Aeronautics and
Space Administration