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December 12, 1969

## MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL YOST

SUBJECT: NASA Visit to PE and Itek

Dr. Newell, General Smart, [ ] and General Allen are visiting PE on the morning of December 18 and Itek that afternoon. The purpose of the visit is to discuss technology and facilities applicable to the development of a large astronomical telescope. We are co-sponsoring this trip because NRO contracts will be discussed. In preparation for this meeting Dr. Newell is meeting in General Allen's office at 1000 on Tuesday morning (December 16). General Allen and Captain Geiger are going to give Dr. Newell a rundown on NRO systems with particular attention to research and development projects in the optical technology area. I suggested to General Allen that you also attend this meeting and that along with the technology aspects Dr. Newell be reminded of the policy aspects of our programs. I am particularly concerned with the NASA/CORONA issue. General Allen asked that we furnish him some appropriate words. I suggest something along the following lines.

We recognize that Dr. Newell has been briefed previously, however, we wanted to bring him up to date on policy matters. We are concerned because we see an increasing number of instances of disclosures by witting or credible people which tend to verify the fact of satellite reconnaissance and other overflights of denied territories. We anticipate that this problem will increase as the subject of ERS is discussed and the problems become very large if we do use CORONA in the ERS role. We have had previous experiences in trying to surface NRO systems in the white world, e.g. Percheron and UPWARD. Although these efforts stopped short of actual fruition, they all involved severe problems of retaining cover. The point is that there does exist a national policy approved by the President which requires that the U.S. government

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does not admit to the fact of satellite reconnaissance and there has been no change to this policy. We solicit NASA help in keeping knowledge of NRO programs and the offer of CORONA to NASA to the fewest people possible. We suggest that the guidelines sent to General Smart by letter of December 11 will help us maintain security aspects of the studies.

*Frederick L. Hoffmann*  
FREDERICK L. HOFFMANN  
Major, USAF

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