

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

MR

Feb 11

The attached study
was written by
Col. K. Talley of SAC.
It was felt that our
gratuitous comments
on this type of task
would generate a contest.
We therefore decided to
mention it in a low profile,
and let the issue drop.

J. H. [Signature]

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

WASHINGTON 20330



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

November 14, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE LIAISON
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, PLANS & OPERATIONS
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
→ DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, SYSTEMS & LOGISTICS
THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
COMPTROLLER OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Limitations on Release of Information Concerning
Weapon Systems

The attached study was recently forwarded to General Hogan by a major command information officer for consideration and any action deemed appropriate. I think the study makes some cogent points. Its conclusions and recommendations appear to be both feasible and sound from a functional information standpoint.

Coincidentally, the subject of possible realignment of Air Force security and policy review procedures has come up in relation to other aspects of the public information function. Both the Directorate of Security Review, OASD(PA), and the Secretary of the Air Force have indicated active interest in this area. We have informed the Secretary that our study of this subject is expected to produce specific recommendations by the end of this year.

However, since any recommendations we ultimately make will impact in your functional area, it is imperative we have the benefit of your thinking prior to making any judgment upon which to base our recommendations to the Secretary.

Therefore, request you review the attached study and forward your comments by December 3, 1969. Please comment as extensively as you wish, with particular attention to the study's conclusions and recommendations. Our project officer is Mr. James R. Newton, SAFOIPD, Extension 79835 or 74065.



THOMAS P. COLEMAN
Brigadier General, USAF
Deputy Director of Information

1 Attachment
Study

SUBJECT: Limitations on Release of Information Concerning Weapons Systems

TO:

PROBLEM

1. Severe limitations on release of information about new weapons systems prevent their importance being fully appreciated by the public and Congress. This reduces survivability in economic and/or political exigencies.

FACTORS

2. Some really promising U.S. Air Force weapons systems have died in anonymity -- their need, capabilities and potential practically unknown by the public, Congress, and in some instances, the people in the Air Force.

This has been in part due to high classification including the increasing use of the special access category on new weapons systems. There seems to be overkill in this area yet there is no apparent security problem. On the other hand, it is agreed throughout the Air Force, there is a very grave problem of urgently needed weapons systems being slipped or canceled. The reason for this is certainly in part lack of understanding of their need and importance. The extent of understanding is proportionate to the amount of information that is made available about systems.

Skybolt, Dynasoar, and some others have gone down the tube. Most recently MOL, on which Air Force placed major hopes for an expanded space mission was lost. Administration or DOD policy and budget considerations are often responsible. But, there is some reason to believe the Air Staff, the Air Force system of security, some of the R&D agencies and the SPOs on occasion have a role in the loss of weapons systems as well as in their creation. As aptly stated in a contemporary paper, democracy simply doesn't work if the people do not have the essential facts. The essential facts need not include details that would constitute legitimately classified information. It would appear some serious study of the matter by USAF and action if and as indicated is in order.

DOD REGULATION S5200.13

In the early '60s Dr. Charyk was given responsibility by Mr. McNamara for drawing up a security policy for military space programs. The drafts of the policy indicated a complete blackout of all classified information would result as well as a blackout of meaningful unclassified information.

With the Air Force seeking space mission capability recognition, under this regulation it was simply not possible. The regulation effectively prevented recognition of space accomplishment by any service and credit for weapons systems developed. It destroyed the identity of the latter. Perhaps the most unfortunate overall effect was to make it practically impossible for the American people to learn anything of consequence from official sources about the military potential in space and the hardware required for space defense.

Strenuous objections by SAFOI-X and P to the rigid blanket provisions of this regulation were ignored and it was subsequently published. It is secret so its provisions are not subject to open examination. Its classification prevents most people from knowing of its existence.

Today much, if not most, of the information the regulation sought to protect has been put in the public realm by unofficial sources since its publication seven years ago. Detailed stories about secret, limited access space projects have appeared in numerous news and space publications. Many technologies requiring some protection initially have become obsolete or it is known the Soviets have cognizance.

One undesirable purpose served by the regulation's blanket blackout effect today is to prevent official information on vital military space activity from reaching the public. It limits their knowledge to unofficial often distorted or inaccurate information and effectively prevents authorities in military space systems from explaining the probable role of space weapons in future wars to the public.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION GUIDE SYSTEM

Even without the DOD Policy S5200, the Security Classification Guide System of the Air Force as it presently functions, can in many instances effectively prevent the democratic process of public opinion and congressional reaction thereto. It can even keep a vast majority of responsible Air Force people from knowledge of systems on which the future of the Air Force and nation may depend.

It is understood the Security Classification Guide is prepared primarily by the SPO of each new weapon system. This is done early in the development process and has the effect of enumerating in detail every aspect of the system to be classified and the degree of classification. The SPO has more or less autonomous authority over what goes into the Security Classification Guide. He can arbitrarily establish a classification of secret without other agencies or requirements having a voice in the matter. He can also be the prime factor in special access category being established.

Whatever he decides, the Air Force normally abides by. It is a fact that the higher the classification and fewer the access the safer the program is from outside observation, meddling and criticism. Also, of course, the more secure it is, the less the public, Congress and the rest of the Air Force know about it.

A sufficiently tight security classification guide such as on MOL in concert with DOD Regulation S5200.13, effectively prevents any normal democratic public opinion effect or public information support. With no public knowledge of a system or the need for it, cancellation can happen suddenly, without public or congressional objection or regrets.

Something that doesn't exist in the public mind will never be missed. If security is so tight, only a few in the Air Force know about it, then those few can't support it and the rest of the Air Force knows nothing about it anyway. It becomes a matter for serious deliberation in the case of MOL, for example, if it would be better to have a little less security and more chance of the system becoming a reality.

Because MOL was cancelled abruptly without compunction, one is led to question if its real importance to the nation justified the almost unprecedented blackout of news on it which to an important degree probably contributed to its demise. At least it's clear the civilian authorities did not

share the Air Force's opinion of its importance. The carefully planned publicity program surrounding NASA's manned space station project is the direct antithesis of that of the Air Force's MOL project. In time some interesting conclusions may be drawn from relative comparisons of these similar projects.

It is not intended to suggest the end of the Security Classification Guide system. But, rather to point out there are other considerations besides the SPO's opinion that should be weighed in framing the guides, considerations for which some overcautious mission dedicated SPOs have demonstrated little aptitude to judge and which they have been often prone to overlook. It would appear unless the Security Classification Guides are changed so the need and purpose of selected space systems can be explained that they will never be competitive with non-military systems.

It is recognized there are occasional systems where compelling sensitivity will require a virtual blackout. But, these are probably the exception rather than the rule.

AIR FORCE CLEARANCE PROCEDURES

Finally, the opinion and judgmental factors applied at lower levels in clearance procedures currently in effect within the Secretary's office and Air Staff should be reexamined. In addition to this, speechwriters of high ranking Air Force officials some times take speeches directly to DOD. DOD is understandably reluctant to edit these unless absolutely necessary. Therefore new information is cleared some times that the Air Staff, especially at working and project officer level, is not aware of. It follows in such circumstances when a speech from a senior officer in the field is submitted to the Air Staff important new information previously cleared by DOD can be and has been cut out before the speech is even submitted to DOD. Presumably if the Air Staff cuts it out DOD won't put it back in.

A case in point may be seen in OTH radar. Even mention of this by name was deleted in the Air Staff for security policy from an ADC General officer's speech at a time when it was being publicly discussed by the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Air Force. A more recent case -- in an ADC General's speech a quote of Secretary of Defense Laird that the Soviets' military budget exceeded ours by 4 to 1 was approved but the number of Soviet satellites passing over Texas was deleted. In another General's speech, the budget ratio quote of 4 to 1 was deleted but the number of Soviet satellites passing over the U. S. was approved.

It would appear in the former example, some one "hadn't got the word" and in the latter there was a difference in judgment and opinion between individuals.

CONCLUSION

3. The information restrictions on military weapons systems, especially space systems, must be eased. In event they are not, it appears these systems may never be competitive with civilian projects of a similar nature.

In a democracy, expenditures of vast sums of public money, have to be explained and justified. Civilian projects on which the processes of public information can operate not only without restriction but aggressively and systematically in their behalf are likely to be successful.

Military projects which are shrouded with secrecy to an extent their real need cannot be explained are not likely to be successfully carried out. This is especially true in the present climate of public opinion and the foreseeable rigid economies in the years ahead.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The Secretary of the Air Force ask the Secretary of Defense to request a review of the seven year old DOD Regulation S5200.13 to determine its validity in the light of different U. S. space policies and current information available on the Soviet Military Space Program. Also with a view to its consistency with his stated policies on informing the public about military matters.

That Security Classification Guides on all priority Air Force weapons systems be reviewed by a joint panel of R&D, Information, Security and L&I, authorities with the object of downgrading to unclassified all information that cannot be justified as classified.

The instructions on preparation of Security Classification Guides be amended to require a maximum amount of information be unclassified consistent with legitimate security and the individual responsible for preparation of a guide to "show cause" when a security classification is assigned or special access category requested. The Security Classification Guide should state information sent for review within AFSC may be submitted simultaneously to SAFOI.

The Office of Air Force Security Review be given an active rather than passive role. It should be established as the top Air Force authority on

DOD cleared information and should maintain and update daily a file of cleared material on all important items of Air Force information interest. SAFOIS should make final review for Air Force prior to submission of material to DOD and should normally be empowered to overrule Secretarial and Air Staff agencies seeking changes more restrictive than current DOD Security Review policies require.