

Industry Observer

Air Force is using high-quality photographs obtained by its little-known 417 "weather" reconnaissance satellite to determine when the view of the earth by surveillance satellites would not be obscured by cloud cover. The 417 program, an outgrowth of early successes with the Radio Corp. of America/National Aeronautics and Space Administration Tiros weather satellite, currently is managed by USAF's Space and Missile Systems Organization. The satellite was developed by the Air Force secretary's special projects office, which has cognizance over USAF's surveillance programs. Soviets are believed to have used satellites for similar purposes as far back as 1962 (AW&ST Dec. 9, 1968, p. 83), although they are not believed to be as technologically advanced as the 417.

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