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May 7, 1969

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MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McLUCAS

SUBJECT: State Department Proposal for Handling the Subject of
Satellite Reconnaissance in Future Strategic Arms
Limitation Talks

Problem:

To show an alternative to a State Department proposal, "Strategic
Missile Talks: Related Aspects of Satellite Reconnaissance Disclosure
Policy."

Background:

We have briefed you on a State Department proposal of September 9,
1968 (see Tab A) to reveal to the Soviets our willingness to (1) forego
on-site inspection and (2) depend upon satellite reconnaissance as an
arms control observation and monitoring system. The essentials of the
State proposal were these:

1. Reclassification of the fact that the U.S. is conducting satellite
reconnaissance from Top Secret BYEMAN (or TALENT-KEYHOLE) to
SECRET.
2. Continuation of the present TKH and BYE systems with regard
to acquired intelligence, capabilities, and operations of reconnaissance
satellites.
3. Revelation to the Soviets that "national means of verification"
includes the use of reconnaissance satellites.

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4. Establishment of a negotiating position based on the assumption that "one side will not impede the operation of the other's reconnaissance satellites."

5. Providing NATO general information on the U.S. negotiating position on verification.

6. Briefing Congress on the U.S. position on verification and capabilities for verifying the proposed agreement through national means.

7. Maintaining a discreet position in response to press inquiries and in official public statements, with preparation to eventually acknowledge "maximum reliance on national means of verification" and the inclusion of the use of satellite photography in such means.

The NRO reacted quickly to this proposal, meeting with representatives of the CIA, JCS, and NASA to develop opposition to the basic proposal and to suggest an alternative. The NRO position, abstracted in our briefing to you, is expressed in detail in Tab B.

On September 13, 1968, the USIB considered the security aspects of the State proposal and decided that "there should be no change in the classification of reconnaissance satellite operations or the information derived from them at this time" (see Tab C, and particularly paragraph 14 for Mr. Helms' further comments).

On September 16, 1968 the NSAM 156 Committee met, discussed the matter at some length, and arrived at no specific conclusion, as far as the minutes are concerned (see Tab D). Those in attendance reported that all parties were to prepare recommended guidelines and furnish them to State.

On September 26, 1968, ACDA issued a proposed guidelines paper for comment by NSAM 156 Committee members (see Tab E). This paper was a decided improvement over the earlier (September 9) proposal. It did not ask for a downgrading of the security surrounding the fact of "satellite reconnaissance. It restricted the delegation's discussions to "information-gathering" satellites, with no further definition

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authorized. Consultation "with Congress" was changed to "selected members of Congress" and was to be done on a classified basis. Constraints were placed on what might eventually be said to the press, with the statement for release limited to "the U. S. is prepared to place maximum reliance on national means of verification." While the NRO objected to some of the woolly thinking in the paper -- and said so -- we agreed that there had been general improvement in concept.

About this time, President Johnson released the pressure he had placed on the SALT negotiators, and, with the November election at hand, SALT entered a waiting phase.

Present Situation:

We have received a copy of a memorandum from State, dated May 1, 1969, which asks the NSSM 28 Committee to consider guidelines for negotiations at future SALT meetings (see Tab F). The NSSM 28 Committee membership is shown on the address list. It is a new committee, organized by Dr. Kissinger, to develop policy for SALT talks.

The new paper is practically a word-for-word copy of the guidelines paper issued on September 26, 1968 (shown above at Tab E).

Possible Courses of Action:

We could spend a good deal of time in editing and improving the proposed paper. We do not believe, however, that an "acceptable" version of this document will do very much for SALT talks or for arms control in general. As you will recall from our briefing, we believe there is a "Fourth Alternative," calling for the bilateral development and operation of an Arms Control Satellite which should become the basis for a strong United States initiative. (By the way, Dr. Paine supports this thought enthusiastically.)

Recommended Course of Action:

We would like to show you a new, short briefing, revised in the light of the new State paper, in which we suggest consideration of an Arms Control Satellite, as an alternative. We will further propose to

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show this briefing to Dr. Homer Newell (NASA), General Allison (JCS), Dr. Clarke (CIA), and Mr. Spurgeon Keeney (WH), to provide a "Fourth Alternative" for consideration in NSSM 28 discussions. We should move rapidly (within the next few days) to make this concept available to the SALT planners.

PAUL E. WORTHMAN
Colonel, USAF

M/R —

We briefed De Melucas on our concept on Saturday, 10 May 1969. He spoke to Mr Packard about it the same morning. Mr Packard was "enchanted" with the idea. On Monday, we briefed General Allison (JCS), Spurgeon Keeney (W/H), Mr. Gerard Smith (SEDA), and Mr. John Shaw (State). On Tuesday, 13 May, we briefed Bruce Clarke (CIA) and Dr. Seaborg. The NSSM 28 Group is to meet on 14 May /w.

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SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE AND ARMS CONTROL

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STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS
State Department Negotiating Alternatives

1. "A position which called for limited on-site inspection, without any prior decision by the U.S. Government regarding a possible fall-back position"
2. A position which called... for limited on-site inspection, but which would be prepared, if the Soviets objected to this proposition, to fall back to exclusive reliance on national means"
3. A position which stated from the outset of negotiations that the U.S. was prepared to place exclusive reliance on national means of verification"

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DISCLOSURE

"Disclosure" consists of two actions:

1. Specifying to the Soviets, openly or secretly, that our "national means of verification" includes or consists largely of "the use of information-gathering satellites."
2. A U.S. spokesman announcing publicly that we are engaged in satellite reconnaissance.

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THE NEGOTIATOR'S DILEMMA

"National means of verification" = satellite reconnaissance program

Acknowledging "the fact of" our covert program:

- Admits to espionage
- Is an irreversible action
- May lead to confrontation

BUT -- failure to discuss our covert program:

- Limits effectiveness in convincing public, press, and Congress on credibility of "national means"
- Restricts negotiations on verification

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SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

Levels of Initiative

1. The full initiative: One US-USSR program
2. First modification: Two cooperative programs
3. Second modification: Two independent programs

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SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

Features of the Satellite

1. The U.S. developer and operator: NASA
2. The prototype satellite: KH-4
3. Resolution: Any USSR-US negotiated value
4. Time to operation: 24 months
5. Security of the program: Totally in the white
6. The U.S. tasking organization and user of end product: ACDA

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U.S. (U.S./U.S.S.R.) ARMS MONITORING SATELLITE

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Examples of Concept

Similar to covert KH-4 (Improved)

Overt Description

Booster: Thor-Agena

Reliable, many flights

Spacecraft: Agena

Used 150 times in low orbit

Camera: Itek-Optical Bar

Based on high-altitude aircraft

Data Return: Recovery

Hundreds of prior successes

On-orbit control: SCF

Adequate proven capability

Performance: 7×10^6 sq miles

Very high design confidence

5-8 ft resolution

ACDA/NASA can obtain quickly detailed, competent, firmly costed proposals for such a system -- overtly.

Could be flown in two years.

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THIS PROPOSAL IS ATTRACTIVE

Because:

1. It gives the United States the initiative in an imaginative peace-keeping venture.
2. It avoids bilateral or international confrontation on satellite reconnaissance.
3. It avoids a difficult episode with our international friends, allies, our Congress and our public.
4. It permits the U.S. to continue its own satellite espionage program unilaterally.
5. If successful, it achieves a great step toward "normalizing" satellite observation.
6. If it fails, the covert program continues unimpaired.

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A FOURTH NEGOTIATING POSITION

4. State from the outset that the United States was prepared to employ an Arms Control Satellite as part of its national means of verification.

a. Previous military and civil research and development in space provides complete confidence in the employment of such a satellite.

b. The satellite will be developed for the U.S. by NASA.

c. The USSR is urged to join in this project.

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