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WASHINGTON, D.C.

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL ALLISON

SUBJECT: Proposals for NAC Discussion

This memorandum responds to a request from for our review and comments on two papers prepared by ACDA. We will address two memoranda, "NAC Statement on SALT," dated June 30, and "SALT Questions and Answers for Consultation" dated July 1. We will limit our comments to those areas directly affecting the National Reconnaissance Program, and to those areas of SALT directly affected by the National Reconnaissance Program.

Specifically, we are extremely concerned with two elements of both papers: Disclosure of the fact of U.S. reconnaissance satellites, and incorrect assessments of the capabilities of NRP projects.

You will recall that in a memorandum dated May 6, 1969, "Strategic Missile Talks; Related Aspects of Satellite Reconnaissance Disclosure Policy," U. Alexis Johnson forwarded a paper which contained the sentence "Aside from likely Soviet objections to provisions for on-site inspections, national means of verification, in particular, observation satellites, provide the only feasible means of policing an agreement of the type and scope the United States has in mind." From our limited view of the total collection capabilities of the U.S., we are prepared to accept the fact that NRP satellites, if permitted unimpeded operation, may provide valuable arms limitation information. It is our strong contention, however, that disclosure of our present or planned capabilities to NAC, Congress, the Soviets, and the public is an irreversible action that will result in confrontation and ultimate stand-down of the vital U.S. collection systems. The national policy concerning satellite reconnaissance was stated in 1962 by NSC Action 2454 and reaffirmed in 1966. Our primary concern is that the capability of the U.S. to operate reconnaissance satellites unilaterally will not be impeded or abridged in any way.

At Tab A are two "Q&A's" which represent unacceptable disclosure statements. First, the Q&A marked (1) should be dropped in its entirety from NAC discussions. We believe direct briefings of

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selected heads of NATO governments would be more appropriate and vastly safer to our Program. This was done, to a limited degree, by Mr. McCone (DCI) in 1963. This brings up the Q&A marked (2) at Tab A. The answer provided by ACDA is incorrect. The facts are:

At the request of the NSAM 156 Ad Hoc Committee on satellite reconnaissance policy, and with Presidential approval, Mr. McCone briefed the heads of state of the United Kingdom, West Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Norway and Denmark. Mr. McCone did not discuss capabilities, but stated four points:

1. The U.S. is operating satellite reconnaissance systems.
2. These systems are doing well.
3. The information from these systems aid the common defense.
4. The U.S. is prepared to continue unilateral operation of these systems.

Our position with regard to Q&A (2) is the same as to (1). We should brief selected heads of state only on means and realistic capabilities. Further, we should not indicate our willingness to accept exclusive reliance on "national means of verification."

Our second concern is the two items at Tab B. The item marked (1) is erroneous. The NRP systems presently being considered for significant verification roles are in development, have never flown, and do not represent a "proven capability." Further, we do not believe that any SALT option can only be verified by national means. No NRP system can ever be reasonably considered to provide the information obtainable through on-site inspections. We recommend the Answer be modified as shown at Tab B.

The item marked (2), while it hedges on verification capabilities, is overly optimistic. We suggest that the inadequacy of present and planned systems to monitor certain agreements be more forcefully worded.

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We are prepared to discuss with you both issues: disclosure of the fact of U. S. satellite reconnaissance and present and planned capabilities of NRP systems, at your request.


JOHN R. MECEDA
Captain, USAF
Asst Deputy Director for
Plans & Policy

Sent in draft form

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