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8 June 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. FLAX

SUBJECT: Transfer of Space Vehicle Recovery Mission  
to Air Rescue Service

Problem:

The Air Staff is studying the desirability of consolidating all rescue and recovery activities in a single command. This means that the 6594th Recovery Control Group could be transferred out of the Air Force Systems Command.

Background:

In May 1961, AFOS 3/9 "Long Range Objectives of the Air Rescue Service," was approved and signed by the Chief of Staff. This ARS objective was implemented by AFR 20-54, October 17, 1961, which assigned to the Air Rescue Service the mission to search for and recover personnel and aerospace hardware. This assignment included research and development associated activities (Tab A).

We became aware of this matter in June 1962 when the Air Staff prepared transfer documents which proposed the assignment of the 6594th Recovery Control Group to MATS. At that time the DNRO -- Dr. Char'yk -- deferred the transfer of the 6594th by oral agreement with the Vice Chief of Staff.

A second attempt to transfer the 6594th RCG was made in the Fall of 1963. Dr. McMillan sent a memorandum to the Vice Chief of Staff on October 18, 1963 (Tab B), which resulted in the cancellation of the transfer.

We became aware of a third transfer attempt in March 1965. A heavy majority of the Air Staff sponsored this effort for six months.

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Generals Schriever and Ferguson opposed the action from the start; when General Friedman joined their ranks in September the matter was shelved.

Present Status:

The Air Staff is again studying the transfer of all "aerospace rescue and recovery activities" in the light of "the fact that five major commands are engaged in recovery activities" (Tab C). The 6594th RCG is the major activity to be reviewed. We view this study with concern because the transfer of the 6594th would cause us serious problems.

1. It would seriously weaken the command and security control which you presently exercise over the recovery force required to support NRP activities. (General Martin, in wearing his second hat -- "Deputy Commander for Satellite Programs" -- exercises actual operational control over the force whenever it is recovering an NRP capsule.)

2. The perennial argument that ARS could do a better job of "managing" the recovery operation is not valid because aircraft operations are only part of the integrated recovery activity. NRO operations involve directing Navy activities (personnel and surface ships), Air Weather Service, Air Rescue Service, Satellite Control Facility, and 6594th RCG activities.

3. Loss of 6594th RCG resources would also mean that the Director, Program A would lose control over the technical configuration of the recovery aircraft.

We have managed to forestall this matter to date; however, since programming documents still mention the eventual (future) transfer of the 6594th to the ARS, the issue is coming up for automatic re-study every year. During a recent visit to Headquarters SSD and the AFSC, General McConnell reportedly reviewed the activities and role of the 6594th RCG and indicated to Generals Schriever and Funk that he had made a decision to leave the 6594th assigned to AFSC for the foreseeable future. Since the Chief of Staff has made this decision, it would seem reasonable to change USAF programming documents by deleting references to a transfer of the 6594th.

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Recommendation:

The attached memorandum requests the Chief of Staff to change USAF programming documents by deleting a proposed future transfer of the 6594th RCG to the Air Rescue Service. I recommend that you sign the memorandum.

RICHARD S. QUIGGINS  
Lt Colonel, USAF

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Lt Col Quiggins/me/8 Jun 66

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF, USAF

SUBJECT: Space Recovery Responsibility

I have been informed that transfer of the 6594th Recovery Control Group from AFSC to MAC (Air Rescue Service) is again being studied by the Air Staff (AFXSASC). This proposal has been submitted each year since 1961 when AFOS 3/9 "Long Range Objectives of the Air Rescue Service" (implemented by AFR 20-54) was approved. The proposal has also been reflected in Air Force programming documents, since that date.

For reasons which you know, this proposal poses a serious problem for the National Reconnaissance Office. I do not anticipate that the mission or responsibilities of the 6594th RCG will change significantly in the foreseeable future, and believe that the Air Force and the National Reconnaissance Office would have very little to gain by further studies. I would appreciate it if the Air Staff study group were instructed to eliminate the 6594th RCG from its Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Activities Study and the transfer proposal were deleted from USAF programming documents.

If either of these requests raises any serious problems for you, I will be glad to discuss them further.

Distribution:

Addressee

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Alexander H. Flax

Director

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