DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
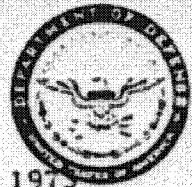### HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE SYSTEMS COMMAND
ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20334

REPLY TO ATTN OF: DO   13 April 1975

SUBJECT: 6594th Test Group (U)

TO: HQ USAF/PRP/Brig Gen Denniston

1. (U) Reference our telephone conversations concerning the 6594th Test Group (TG) in Hawaii.

2. (U) The 6594th TG is an integral organizational element of the Air Force Satellite Control Facility (AFSCF) -- a subordinate command of AFSC's Space and Missile Organization (SAMSO). Other principal organizational elements of the AFSCF include (1) the Satellite Test Center (STC) at Sunnyvale, California, and (2) the world-wide satellite tracking and control network.

3. (S) The AFSCF (1) assumes control of a satellite after launch, (2) tracks its position continuously, (3) directs or "commands" changes to its orbit, (4) "commands" the activation/inactivation of sensors aboard the satellite, (5) "commands" the satellite to deorbit, and (6) determines the size and directs the deployment and positioning of the recovery force (i.e., C-130s, ships, and CH-3s of the 6594th TG). All of these functions are discharged on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force's Special Projects Office whose director is also a SAMSO Deputy Commander. All functions dealing with the command, control, and recovery of Special Project satellites are therefore integrated into a single Air Force field command, the AFSCF.

4. (S) The priority of the Special Project satellite efforts is 1-1 and requires resources of the 6594th TG to be totally dedicated to the recovery mission. The aircraft and ships of the AFSCF cannot be used to satisfy other Air Force missions. In fact, there are contingency plans in being which would require the recovery force to deploy for satellite recovery whenever such plans are activated.

5. (U) The command control arrangements for the recovery force provide for direct tasking over recovery operations by the STC at Sunnyvale, California. There are no intervening levels of command authority.

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6. (S) The annual estimated savings of some $2.2 million -- if the force structure of the 6594th TG's surface recovery force was changed from a ship/CH-3 combination to an HH-53/C-130H/P/N combination -- would be realized by the Air Force. These estimated savings are not dependent on the Major Command assigned the recovery aspect of the overall satellite mission. The estimated savings were identified by the AFSCF and are based on equipping the new surface recovery force from existing Air Force assets.

7. (C) The AFSCF is currently merging a 6594th TG Operating Location, which has been based at Edwards AFB, with its parent unit at Hickam. Inherent in this merger which is planned to be completed by 30 June 1973 is the assumption by the 6594th TG of a continuing R&D mission involving the development of satellite parachutes, satellite recovery equipment, and operational satellite recovery techniques. You will recall that in addition to manpower and dollar savings associated with this merger was the release by AFSC of a C-130 aircraft.

8. (S) A special personnel selection system is observed in the selection and assignment of aircrew personnel to the 6594th TG. The 6594th TG requires very demanding aircrew standards for satellite recovery quali-fication. Each newly-assigned aircrewman must complete a long and intensive training program. Upon reassignment to other Air Force duties, many 6594th TG personnel receive travel and duty restrictions.

9. (S) The question of whether MAC or AFSC should be assigned the responsibility for the recovery aspect of the overall satellite mission has been reviewed periodically by the Air Staff since the early 1960s. On 22 July 1971, the then Vice Chief of Staff (General John C. Meyer) last reaffirmed the assignment of the mission to AFSC.

FOR THE COMMANDER

ABBOTT C. GREENLEAF
Brigadier General, USAF
DCS/Operations

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