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~~BYEMAN-TALENT-KEYHOLE~~
CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY

~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

January 30, 1990

Rich
MEMORANDUM FOR NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF (RICH DAVIS)

SUBJECT: "Unlisted" Suspect Site Inspection Requests
Under START (U)

I enjoyed talking with you last month about the emerging START Suspect Site Inspection (SSI) regime, and appreciated your interest in NRO concerns. During our conversation, you asked if we had considered how "unlisted" SSI requests should be processed to protect sensitive programs and activities. This personal note replies to that and several related areas I thought you would be interested in.

a. RIGHT OF REFUSAL: First, we recognize that the policy community has determined a need for SSI in the START Treaty, related to non-deployed missile limits.

[Redacted]

b. PROCESSING OF SSI REQUESTS: Assuming that refusals will be exercised when necessary, we must be able to protect the existence or capabilities of sensitive programs as we formulate replies to Soviet requests.

(1) Several points are worth considering. First,

[Redacted] Second, it would be wise to consider the potential political consequences of making an SSI request. ("We told you the Soviets would cheat--you just didn't get there fast enough this time.") Thus, there may be relatively few SSI requests, in practice.

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

(2) Given that, it becomes practical to establish a mechanism where authority to approve/disapprove SSI requests rests with the cognizant cabinet official, with only NSC Staff involvement.

[Redacted]

[Redacted] 1988 ABM Treaty Review. Naturally, any decision to reject an SSI could be overturned by the President.

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(3) Adequate decision time for SSI requests is essential.

c. CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTING/REJECTING AN SSI REQUEST:
Requests for SSI should be accompanied by some evidence of specific "illegal ballistic missile activity," and identify particular suspect sites by building, not general geographic location. If the USG determines the US facility is not conducting "illegal ballistic missile activity," the request should be refused and a good faith effort made to resolve the concern with the Soviets.

d. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SSI:

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(b)(3)



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(4) SSIs should be very short, and revisits should be limited. It takes only a short time to verify the absence of illegal ballistic missile activity

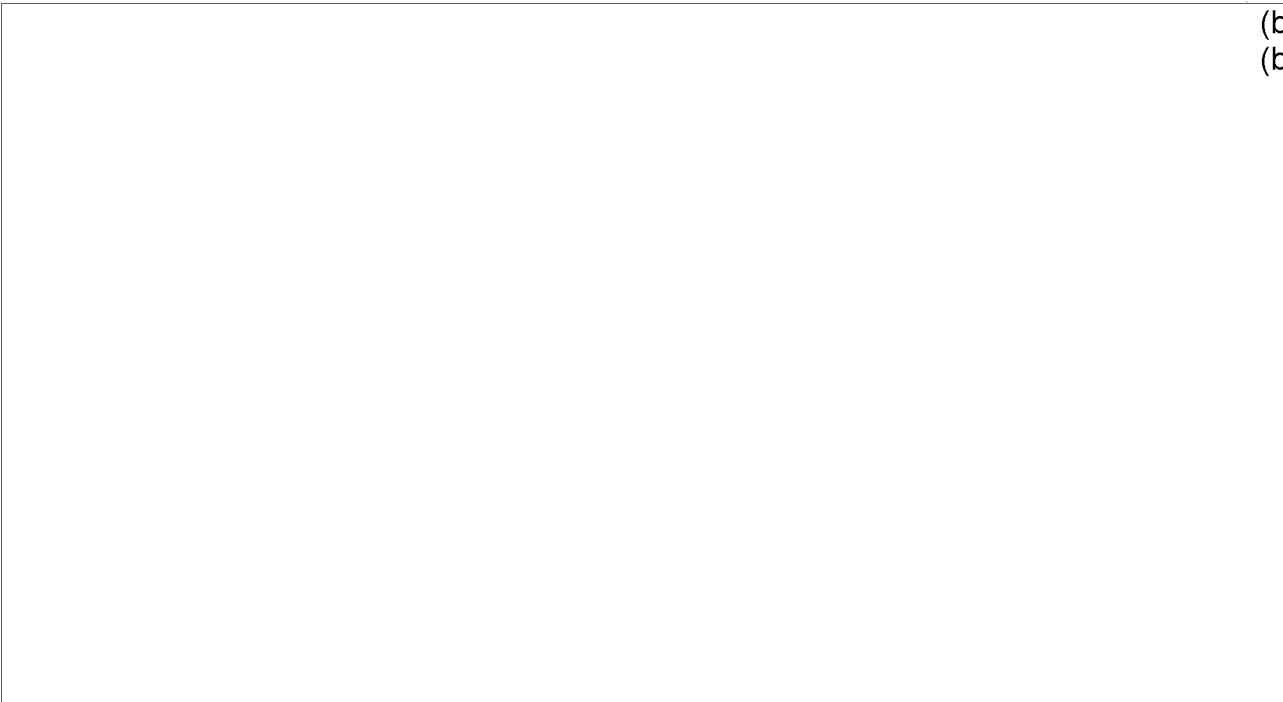


(5) The number of annual SSI requests/inspections should be limited. This would force the Soviets to focus on sites of legitimate concern as to ballistic missile-related activity. Limited SSIs also make more bearable the financial and programmatic impacts of permitted inspections.



(6)

the cost to the nation could mount quickly.



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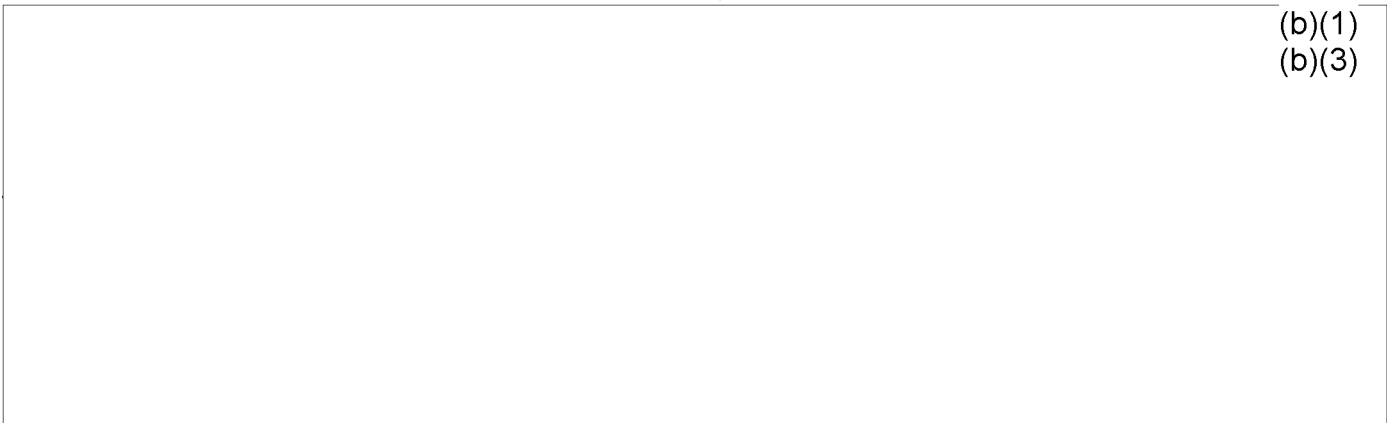
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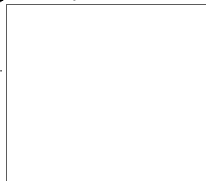
I hope that these perspectives will be of use to you. If needed, I would be pleased to discuss our concerns further. Please call me at [redacted] if you have any questions.

Jim
JAMES L. RODGERS, Captain, USAF
Deputy for National Security
Affairs

cc: [redacted]
IC Rep to the NSC Staff

(b)(3)

Rich:
We are working these issues through the interagency process, of course -- but given our chat last month, thought you would appreciate some "off-line" commentary.



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