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Dear Dave:

You recently asked me to let you know the rationale behind the requirement for  data return from an EOI satellite system. Here is a paper prepared by the Chairman of the USIB Committee for Imagery Requirements and Exploitation which discusses this in detail. The paper is long but the subject is quite complicated and, in view of the widespread interest in this question, I think it is important to cover all considerations thoroughly.

I hope you will take time to read the paper in full; however, the essence of this requirement can be summarized as follows:

Although an EOI system can satisfy the needs of routine surveillance and technical intelligence very economically and well, its new and unique contribution will be to provide intelligence for strategic indications and warning for crisis situations. These have always been the highest national priority collection requirements which, until recently, technology has been unable to support. Because of the perishability of the relevant

data, the intelligence community believes that the value of a system for these functions becomes very questionable if the system cannot support a cycle of collection, processing, analysis and reporting which has a total time span of less than a day. I think this view is supported by experience during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, and consistent with our own desires for information and the demands we get from the White House during periods of stress.

It is, of course, not possible to put a precise value on  as compared to, say, several hours for data return from the satellite, and as is true of all our "requirements" the value finally selected should be influenced by system cost and feasibility considerations. However, in view of the time requirements of other parts of the cycle and the importance of having as much time as possible for the critical analysis process, there is considerable value to be accrued by pushing the system toward a very rapid data return capability, and there is a rapid decline in system value as data return time becomes longer than several hours.

Helms

cc: Dr. David  
Dr. McLucas  
Dr. Foster  
Gen. Bennett  
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