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

15 July

THE NRO STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PLUMMER

SUBJECT: BYEMAN/TALENT-KEYHOLE Compartmentation

DIA is conducting, on behalf of the JCS, a study of compartmentation of satellite reconnaissance information. The objective is to recommend decompartmentation of TK information, apparently on a large scale.

The recommendations for decompartmentation will be sent to the Secretary of Defense, with a request that he endorse them and send them to the DCI for action, under his responsibility for the protection of intelligence sources and methods.

I am concerned that the recommendations resulting from this study will include decompartmenting technical or operational information which has been released from BYEMAN into TK channels to assist in the analysis of the overhead reconnaissance product. This kind of information is not needed by intelligence consumers and should not be disseminated without adequate control.

At the right is a memo from you to the Secretary of Defense requesting consultation on any recommendation issuing from the JCS study before it is sent to the DCI for action. The objective is to ensure that you have the opportunity to recommend appropriate protection for information impacting upon NRO activities prior to any action to decompartment it.

HAROLD P. WHEELER, JR.
Colonel, USAF
Director

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Compartmentation of Overhead Reconnaissance Products

A study of the compartmentation of overhead reconnaissance product is being conducted by the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is anticipated that the study will result in a recommendation to decompartment information currently protected in TALENT-KEYHOLE channels. This recommendation would be forwarded to you for endorsement and presentation to the Director of Central Intelligence for action.

In view of your recent strong expression of concern for security within the Department of Defense, I wish to point out that any substantial change in security handling of overhead reconnaissance product is of vital concern to me. In fact, considerable operational information about NRO programs has been placed under TK compartmentation to facilitate technical analysis of satellite product.

Because decompartmentation of such information would, in my opinion, pose a serious risk to NRO program security, I request that the NRO be given the opportunity to review and comment upon any recommendation to decompartment TALENT-KEYHOLE information prior to your endorsement to the DCI. This consultation would permit the NRO to identify information categories which would be unnecessarily given broader exposure and recommend alternative means of protection, such as returning them to the BYEMAN compartment.

J. W. Plummer

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