

~~TOP SECRET~~

POL-A-4  
POL-A-5✓

HANDLE VIA  
[REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

[REDACTED]

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

June 26, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. FLAX

SUBJECT: Decontrol and Downgrading  
of Satellite Photography

General Berg, Colonel Worthman, Mr. [REDACTED] and I have gone over the attached letter. We have concluded that we can think of no other action we could suggest to ameliorate the adverse effects which we foresee on the [REDACTED] System. General Berg has asked Mr. [REDACTED] to begin at once on a careful study of what changes if any are required in the [REDACTED] System.

Would you consider this letter and call upon us if you wish to discuss the matter further; otherwise, if you agree and will return the attached draft, we will put it in final form for your signature.

Since the attached USIB paper which is the subject of your letter is now out for vote slip approval, lacking I believe only the views of the DIA and the CIA, it is suggested that in responding we recommend that the attached substitute paragraph V.G., page 7, be used to replace the one in the Board's paper.

[REDACTED]

James Q. Reber

Attachments (3)  
Draft ltr to Helms  
Revised para V.G.  
USIB-D-41.12/28

*Prepared in Operation ~~TOP SECRET~~!*

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June 26, 1967

Dear Dick:

*I would like to comment on*  
~~Let me refer to~~ the document on "Decontrol and Down-  
grading of Satellite Photography" (USIB-D-41.12/28) which  
is currently distributed to the Board for its concurrence.  
~~If this paper~~ is approved with its provision for treating  
the fact of satellite photographic reconnaissance at no  
higher than the SECRET classification, it will have *a considerable* impact  
on the ~~Security Control System~~ Security Control System the extent of which  
we are currently exploring as well as what actions *should* must be  
taken with regard to that System. [ Since the paper recommends  
that final USIB approval be as of the date of the signature  
of the new proposed Presidential letter and since it will  
take some time for COMIREX to provide the complete detailed  
instructions for the implementation of Tab 1, I would assume  
that between four and eight weeks will elapse before the  
actions of the subject paper would go into effect. It would  
be helpful if this office were advised if my estimate on  
timing is incorrect. ]

~~Since I have an obligation to you for the maintenance~~  
~~in view of my responsibility~~  
of operational security through the ~~Security Control System~~ System, I must  
say that I anticipate an ~~almost inevitable~~ operational

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PAGE 3-A  
CONTROL SYSTEM

security erosion as the fact of satellite reconnaissance and information that comes available through intelligence publications become widely known amongst individuals outside both the TALENT-KEYHOLE and the ██████████ Systems. I believe that our task of adjustment to this new decision and our capability to maintain operational security would be aided and strengthened if an additional paragraph were added to the draft which is appended to the subject document.

The effect of the foregoing is to permit a recognition at the SECRET classification level that the United States has a satellite photographic reconnaissance program. However, since it is a very valuable national security asset, details are kept highly classified and are not available to personnel without special clearances. It is the national policy that the fact of such a program is not to be discussed publicly by officers of the United States Government.

*See this really a real problem*  
[Redacted]

Alexander H. Flax

Honorable Richard Helms  
Director of Central Intelligence  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C.

JQR/mc

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V. G. Ordinarily the date of the information will not be more precisely defined than by month and year. In those instances where a more precise date is essential to the meaning and significance of the information, it may be used following the approval of the Senior Intelligence Officer or his designee.

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KEYHOLE CHANNELS~~  
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If it is planned to maintain  
a high level security for technical  
and operational details of collection  
systems and activities

of course

~~to be~~ <sup>Continuing</sup>  
to confirm the importance  
of protecting the  
present state of our  
satellite system resources  
system the extent of  
its success as its  
operations and to this  
end direct that continued  
maintenance the TALENT-  
KEYHOLE Control System  
and related other required  
special security controls  
be maintained