



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

CONFIDENTIAL

THE NRO STAFF

March 26, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PLUMMER

SUBJECT: Exchange Between the Press and ASD(PA)

With regard to the most recent exchange between the press and the ASD (Public Affairs), we believe that Mr. Friedheim did a creditable job in fending off the questions. However, the exchange points out a latent problem which, although having no basis in fact, could be made to grow out of proportion by the media. In other words, should your association with the NRP be acknowledged, an openly debated defense of your conflict of interest safeguards could occur. This debate, in turn, could draw out the program structure and the modus operandi of decision making and contracting for the NRP. A rational security safeguarding would be difficult.

We think that it would be useful for you in your conversations with SecDef to point out the need for holding the line insofar as further identifying the DNRO and the organization. If pressures should develop along the lines which precipitated the acknowledgement statement which Mr. Friedheim has used, we think that such pressures should be subjected to evaluation and not to an ad hoc deliberation. Meanwhile a staunch "no comment" and "no discussion" policy vis-a-vis the NRO or satellite reconnaissance should be continued.

We have wrestled the problem of whether declassification of the title NRO would also require identifying its parent. Surely Mr. Plummer will find some way to deal with this problem.



LT COLONEL, USAF

I fully agree with the thoughts expressed here, indeed further acknowledgement of our activities/organization will affect our operation. We should unhesitatingly accept it before allowing erosion.

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