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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

August 1, 1973

NOTE FOR DR. McLUCAS

At the right is an outline for your use during your meeting with Mr. Colby on Thursday, August 2. At Tab A is an extract of some of the major provisions of the four charters for the NRO. The charters themselves are in the separate folder attached.

At Tab B is a list of the Directors of the NRO and their terms in office.

FREDERICK L. HOFMANN
Lt Colonel, USAF

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HISTORICAL BACKDROP BRIEFING FOR MR. COLBY

I. Pre-1960 Era

- covert U-2 program - 1955 - CIA/Air Force
- covert DISCOVERER satellite - 1958 - CIA/Air Force
- overt SAMOS satellite - 1956 - Air Force

II. 1960 Events

- U-2 shot down creating national embarrassment
- review of satellite efforts - first success of DISCOVERER (CORONA)
- decision to consolidate efforts into overall covert organization
- Dr. Joe Charyk named as manager of covert effort
 - CIA Program Office - Washington based
 - Air Force Program Office - Los Angeles based

III. 1961-1963 - Charyk Era

- CIA/DOD Agreements
- NRO established - streamlined management directly by top level
- difficult relationships
 - AF Systems Command desires
 - CIA moves independently
 - Air Force submissive to DNRO desires

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- Navy joins program with SIGINT satellite
- special security strengthened [REDACTED] System
- national political/information policy - NSAM 156 Committee
 - "fact of" policy
 - do not reveal scope of quality of program
 - do not provoke others
 - work for tacit agreements
 - work for disarmament
 - work for legitimizing space observation

IV. 1963-1965 - McMillan Era

- original personalities change DOD/CIA
- no management safety valve for disputes
- national dependence grows on satellites
- hardware at state of the art and matures
- NRO autonomous within Pentagon/CIA still somewhat independent
- PFIAB proposes a new organizational arrangement
 - SecDef Executive Agent
 - ExCom with DepSecDef Chairman; DCI member; White House Assistant member to make resource allocation decisions
 - DNRO to carry out management and to conduct and operate program

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V. 1965-1969 - Flax Era

- period of stability under new arrangement
- DDR&E desires strong role but overruled
- new most sophisticated systems initiated - fewer but higher quality flights planned
- NASA begins earth observation plans - is constrained in quality
- NSAM 156 policy affirmed
- CIA continues liberal approach to development - Air Force continues conservative development philosophy
- disarmament negotiations planned - no overriding necessity for on-site inspection
- budget hits high levels

VI. 1969-1973 - McLucas Era

- begins with stability - new systems reaching fruition
- ambiguous parallel charters
 - ASD/I created - feels that control of resources is his job
 - President's reorganization directive also establishes resource controls -- and says NRO should stay the same
 - NSA operational role under NSCID 6
- budget tightening
- ExCom drawing new advisors
- irresistible urges to normalize NRO management and operation in face of even higher national dependence on program success - reviews, decompartmenting

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- changes to ExCom - ambiguity in roles and participation
rapid changes in DOD/CIA hierarchy
- autonomy becoming eroded in management control
 - feeling by some that ExCom is ineffective
 - contractor arrangements losing necessary mystique
 - general letdown in exclusiveness might hurt success
- need evident to become more visible to serve tactical users
- NASA may be too quickly moving ahead in earth resources sensing role -- appearance of economic espionage without national policy planning
- national dependence at highest level - satellites are huge expense in face of budget reductions - satellites in most cases are non-substitutable resources
- there has not been proposed a better way to conduct the NRP - erosion is occurring and it is harmful

VII. Observations for Future

- past four and a half years have been technically very successful and satisfying
- the DNRO job is as difficult as ever before in management
 - now is "second guessed" by self-appointed reviewers
 - technical "help" coming more frequently
 - "chain of command" not clean
- security is a tough job - has held the line however - getting more difficult all of the time
- things that should be done soon


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1. management line should be affirmed and tightened aimed at restoring autonomy and streamline
2. all observation and collection from space should be under single management for non-civil activity
3. security should be tightened for project access
4. present produce access not done well - present system is good but those who complain do not understand its flexibility
5. I. C. resource decisions should have direct NRO participation
6. NRO should guide satisfaction of tectical needs
7. NRO understands requirements and technical capability of systems best - can provide most objective optimization of collection operation
8. I. C. involvements in effectiveness and efficiency should get focus off satellite collectors and onto exploitation
9. Advisory role of DNRO (and DDNRO) to the DCI -- in his community role -- should be recognized and established now.

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DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

FROM

TO

Dr. Joseph V. Charyk
Dr. Brockway McMillan
Dr. Alexander Flax
Dr. John L. McLucas

September 6, 1961
March 1, 1963
October 1, 1965
March 17, 1969

March 1, 1963
October 1, 1965
March 17, 1969
Present

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6 Sep 61

- NRO under direction of the Under Secretary of the Air Force and the Deputy Director (Plans) of the CIA jointly.
- NRO responsive solely to USIB for requirements and priorities.
- Under Secretary and DD(P) exercised direct content over elements in their organizations

2 May 62

- Technical management for all NRP assigned to DNRO.
- CIA becomes Executive Agent for DNRO for CIA projects.
- DNRO responsible for funding the NRP.

13 Mar 63

- Secretary of Defense is Executive Agent for NRP.
- NRO separate operating agency.
- DDNRO appointed by DCI.
- - Supervise CIA efforts under NRP.
- Chain of Command from Secretary of Defense directly to DNRO.

11 Aug 65

- established ExCom.
- DNRO sits with USIB for the matters affecting the NRP.
- realignment of DDNRO role.

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