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~~SENSITIVE INFORMATION~~

~~151~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. RUSH

SUBJECT: Apollo Earth Orbit Contingency Photography

As is the practice, NASA is preparing a memorandum for the 40 Committee which covers the eventuality of an Apollo earth orbital contingency mission. If Apollo 17 is forced to fly in earth orbit, its camera system and orbital path would permit NASA to obtain 10 meter resolution imagery of the Soviet Union and China, as well as of other areas outside the U.S. Previous Apollo contingency mission plans approved by the 40 Committee would have permitted NASA to collect imagery of a politically non-sensitive nature, i.e., only of the U.S. and near U.S. areas. NASA's draft memorandum is at Attachment 1. The NRO memorandum of response is at Attachment 2.

We have reservations at this time about the possibility of NASA overtly photographing sensitive areas at reasonably high resolution. OSD(ISA) holds similar reservations. I understand that the State Department is not concerned about the nature of the request but that ACDA has very strong reservations in connection with the SALT verification process. CIA has not directly committed itself on this issue but is known to be apprehensive about the potential for second or third country objection to being imaged without permission, and the lack of a definitive U.S. response policy.

I recommend that you advocate the continuation of a very conservative policy. A precedent would be established if NASA

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[REDACTED]

is permitted to conduct overt collection activities of a high resolution imagery nature. I believe that the NASA plan as currently drafted is less than conservative.

This paper is background for your use when the subject comes before the 40 Committee.

[REDACTED]

John L. McLucas

2 Attachments

1. NASA Memo [REDACTED] (7484-72)
2. NRO Memo [REDACTED] (3180-72)

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