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~~US~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

14 September 1971

MEMO FOR LT COLONE [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Reorganizational Thoughts

In considering the future of the NRO, and possible effects of the ASDI reorganization, there are several factors that have significant bearing on the NRO's future effectiveness. I would like to informally present some of my thoughts for whatever value or use you may have.

One of my chief concerns is the ability of the NRO to function in the overt world. We may have a strong charter, but I am convinced that it is worthless unless we are able to effectively control and influence the overt world without having to rely upon our charter. That is -- the Air Force in my opinion only 'puts up' with the NRO because they can't really do anything about us. While we have a piece of paper that says the DNRO literally owns the resources of DOD as required to do his job, the practical fact of life is the DNRO is the Undersecretary and does have control of AF resources. The point is -- most of our cooperation within the Air Force is due to the fact that our boss is their's -- and they have to directly respond to him. In many instances I have felt that our requirements have hurt the Air Force - and as an AF officer I have regrets -- however, my loyalty lies with my employer -- the NRO. To a degree, I am certain that Dr. McLucas is in the same position -- that is, he is the DNRO first and Undersecretary second. Therefore his primary obligation is to the NRO, however regrettable it may be. Should the future DNRO be a non-USAF key

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position, I would have serious doubts as to the ability and, I guess the word is "loyalty" of any 'dummy', 'front', or 'cover' man that might be tasked. The problem that I see is this individual would not be charged with full responsibility -- he would only be a 'tool' or method to control the Air Force. Whether we like it or not, we are primarily an Air Force organization - totally dependent upon the Air Force for support and a major consumer of their ever diminishing funds. Since our program is beyond their control, cuts assumed by the Air Force are proportionately greater than they would normally be. I am sure that this presents a major sore point with General Ryan, and one he would like to get around.

What then are the elements that must be preserved for the NRO to function smoothly?

I. We must preserve our ^{autonomous} anonymous operation. Any burying of the NRO under additional levels of management or review cycles will only inhibit our operation. From what I have observed, additional management results in more staffing, people, paper time and COST. In many cases I also believe that it leads to mediocrity since solutions are by compromise, and leadership is easily abandoned.

II. We must preserve our routine methods of operation and control. This is the Air Force Issue mentioned above. Unless we are able to override the basic issues and concerns of the Air Force, and unless this is recognized without question by the Air Force at all levels we are helpless - or at least severely restricted in our future operations. The very best we could hope for would be a series of tussles that would result in our re-establishment as a controlling force.

III. We must retain our policy function. This is not only to our benefit but government as a whole. By the nature of our organization, we are one of the few places where National Policy and implementing authority

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exist at both the senior and working level of government. While our management is the SECDEF - DCI - WHITE HOUSE level, our day-to-day operation involves the little cogs or "where it gets done" level. We are recognized as a place where "the word" is available, and you can get advice on keeping out of trouble. More times than I wish to recall, I have seen routine correspondence or replies changed that could have 'fouled' a situation simply because the Capt or Lt Col on the NRO Staff was aware of a National Policy paper that would have been violated. Normal government functions with their bureaucratic functions cannot effectively serve this purpose - they don't have the accessibility to information, people, and the desire to 'bite the bullet'.

IV. We must preserve the National character of the NRO. There is a basic distrust within bureaucracy as to the 'hidden meaning' of actions between agencies and departments. The NRO by being constituted of representatives of the various intelligence and service functions has been able to be fairly impartial and open in our dealings. In many cases we are the "sounding board" that is available. We also have access to internal opinions of the various agencies and provide an arena where they may be heard without having had "something slipped over on them". All may not be utopia in relationships - but we are a major, established, recognized source of communications between agencies at both top and bottom levels of management.

What are the possible alternatives for the future?

I. The NRO could remain unchanged. I don't think this is possible - or really desirable. If the ASDI is to really function it must include all the National Programs.

II. The NRO remains basically unchanged, however the DNRO now reports to the ASDI. This could become a nightmare solution. It would interject a major decision making body or organization in our chain of command. It would also mean that many of our decisions and interagency

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actions would be subject to their review and decision. It could require extensive staffing and defacto weakening of the DNRO's charter. This would also place the CIA in an unacceptable position by increasing DOD control of the program.

III. The NRO could be abolished with the Services, CIA and even NSA picking up the former NRO missions. This solution is so bad I won't waste words on it.

IV. The ASDI could become the operational DNRO and DXXX of all National Programs (with a CIA deputy?). Under this scheme all the National Programs would be incorporated under the ASDI and the now existing National Programs would become more of a program office or operational element.

SECDEF

EXCOM

ASDI
(Deputy)

SUPPORT ----- STAFF (Multi Agency/Dept)

Dir AF
Elements
(Space)

Dir Navy
Elements
(O/S/I)

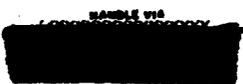
CIA
Elements

NSA

DIA

Under this concept, select elements of the NRO Staff and similar staffs could become a part of the ASDI's for policy, security, operational tradeoffs and evaluation. The program directors would have a restricted charter for their elements, would have service/agency control, but the multiple National Programs would disappear in favor of a single National Program. This would require a significant expansion of the ASDI staff which could and should be drawn from the National Program staffs -- if for no other reason their experience and knowledge.

If this solution is attempted without enlarging the ASDI's staff to include key functions (they would remain with



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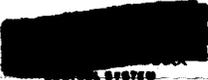


the program director) there would be no significant advantage gained and we would probably be faced with the situation in II above.

These are some of the thoughts that have come to mind - as I think of more I'll pass them to you. I hope you may find them of some benefit.



Major, USAF
Dep Asst for Security



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