

NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

EYES ONLY

23 January 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL KULPA

SUBJECT: NRO Staff/SAFSP Working Relationships

Dear Jack,

As I indicated in my telephone conversation with you and Ken last week, I feel that there may be some rather serious interface problems developing between the Staff here in Washington and your shop. I have elected to send you this personal memorandum, outlining the problems as I see them and requesting your assistance in resolving as many of them as possible. While I have not discussed these particular issues with Dr. Mark, I have had numerous discussions with him on the general operating philosophy which he expects from the Staff and I am therefore reasonably confident that I am operating within the general framework of his desires. With the massive expansion of staffs above us, surely there is enough work to keep us all busy and, hopefully, time to get the work done too; therefore, I hope that we can resolve these points as soon as possible and get on with the basic program objectives. However, if you and I can't reach an agreement on the operating relationships between our organizations, then I think it is imperative that we get together with Dr. Mark as soon as possible and resolve any differences.

The following points seem to be the major areas where disagreement may exist between your staff and mine:

a. With the disestablishment of the SOC in the Staff reorganization it was intended to provide a direct interface between the program offices and ICRS/SORS. However, Dr. Mark still holds the Staff responsible for maintaining an operational oversight and for the direct NRO interface with COMIREX, the SIGINT Committee, and the remainder of the Intelligence Community on other than routine operational matters. To this end I think the following ground rules are appropriate.

(1) The program offices should work directly with the tasking and user elements of the Community on day-to-day mission activities and overall mission planning activities within the general constraints established by the SIGINT/COMIREX and NRO staff guidelines.

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(2) All other Community interfaces should be worked through or with the advice and consent of the NRO Staff program element monitors. This should include any planned or potential changes to launch schedules, system capabilities, or other changes to the overall program plan.

b. When Dr. Mark established the SP East Coast Office, it was intended to provide for a flow of Community information from the East Coast to the West Coast, but not the other way around. I understand and appreciate the fact that your SP East Coast Office must have day-to-day dialogue and interactions with the Community and the Staff, and I have no problem with this. However, I do feel that any formal position or other written data which is to be provided to the Community must be coordinated with and copies provided to the appropriate elements of the Staff.

c. Changes to the established baseline programs--In that the NRO does not maintain extensive and detailed program plans, it is imperative that the NRO Staff and the program office maintain a mutual understanding of the overall characteristics of each system. Since most changes are evolutionary in nature, they are generally tracked based on program office submissions and subsequent approvals. These programs are then periodically described by the NRO Staff in Director's Reports and Congressional Budget Justification submissions. It is imperative that these program submissions accurately reflect the status and any changes to the program. To this end it is essential that all program changes which affect the overall capability of the system or its schedule be documented prior to implementation. Therefore, favorable verbal indications, be they from members of the Staff, myself, Dr. Cook, or even Dr. Mark, should not be construed as formal approval to implement program redirection or new activities. It is essential that such actions be requested and approved in writing prior to incurring obligations on behalf of the Government.

Jack, I don't mean to be arbitrary or unreasonable and therefore I wouldn't quibble over the specific words, but I believe my intent is clear. I also believe that it is important that we reach a mutual understanding on our respective responsibilities and proceed accordingly. If you have any major hangups on these points, I am anxious to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

J. D. HILL
Director

2 Attachments

1. Memo to COMIRE (79)
2. Proposed Msg to SARSP

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NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE NRO STAFF

23 January 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN, COMIREX

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Data Recording Anomaly

REFERENCE: Your memo, subject as above, dated 17 January 1979
[REDACTED] (1009-79)

I understand your concerns and have discussed them with General Kulpa. I agree that it is important that we maintain proper lines of communication in order to best serve both the DCI and the DNRO.

General Kulpa has assured me that the purpose of their message was exploratory in nature. It was intended to define a preliminary assessment of the impact of various [REDACTED] data recording anomalies to enable the program office to explore possible technical fixes to alleviate the more serious problems without impacting the schedule. Based on DMA's input, it now appears that the program office may be able to correct at least the most serious deficiencies, if not all, without impacting the planned launch date. Should he determine he is unable to correct the problem and meet the planned launch date, he will notify the DNRO with an appropriate recommendation which will then be forwarded to the COMIREX for your consideration.

I regret the confusion that was caused; appropriate coordination will, I hope, prevent a recurrence.

[REDACTED]
S. D. HILL
Director

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