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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

February 24, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McLUCAS

SUBJECT: Update on NSAM 156 Activity

The papers to the right were originally provided to you as backup for your January 26 discussion with Mr. Helms on the subject of "fact of."

The current status, as of February 24, is as follows:

a. There was no January meeting of the NSAM 156 working group to finalize the report as originally planned. Two factors contributed to this--Ambassador Johnson's illness and Mr. Helm's and your modified positions which were informally made known to the Working Group Chairman, Mr. Gathright.

b. The Staff has prepared a letter for your signature which restates the NRO position on "fact of." Although the letter is addressed to Ambassador Johnson, Mr. Irwin will take some form of action on it.

c. The Verification Panel has not yet elected to take up the question of ratification of SALT.

d. Owing to the large differences in thinking concerning "fact of" which exist between the various agencies, there does not appear to be a clearly resolvable position possible from which to base a definitive recommendation in response to your original request. Mr. Irwin is going to be approached by Mr. Gathright with the suggestion that the exercise not be concluded because of the divergence of views and little chance of reconciliation and also because the precise situation involving ratification is not yet known. Mr. Gathright will also suggest to Mr. Irwin that the State Department should examine the legal issues of satellite observation in view of SALT "national means" and "sovereign territory" terminology and that State should investigate third country attitudes.

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In summary, if OSD supports the NRO on protecting the "fact of" and if CIA does not change back to a more lenient view of "fact of," a fair hearing of the issue in connection with SALT ratification will be possible.



Major, USAF



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