

75 [REDACTED]  
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

11/27

MEMORANDUM

CR [REDACTED]  
Gen [REDACTED]  
Mr Singel

*Singel*

For information and concurrence.  
Subsequent to our Nov 21 meeting,  
I verbally clarified the point  
in the first paragraph of the  
memo with Mr Rittell. He said  
that it would be useful if we  
could send a memo to him and  
also most helpful if we attached  
the 1971 156 Committee recommendations.

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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



THE NRO STAFF

November 27, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. RATLIFF, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,  
40 COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: NSAM 156 Committee Recommendations for Use of  
the SKYLAB Camera



During our conversation on November 21 we briefly discussed the SKYLAB Earth Terrain Camera. At that time, it was mentioned that NASA did not yet have final approval to employ the camera. Although the NSAM 156 Committee did approve the incorporation and employment of the camera and also the release of acquired photography following a screening, the recommendation specified that the 40 Committee should be requested to provide a "spot" assessment of international-political factors immediately prior to launch.

Because of the concerns attendant to the Apollo 17 Contingency Plan, we believe that it will be equally as difficult to make a well-considered judgement during the Spring of 1973 immediately preceding the SKYLAB launch. Although the majority of SKYLAB 10-20 meter quality imagery is to be correlated with planned experiments, there still remains an apparent need for an overall U.S. policy regarding the political propriety of overtly obtaining high quality unprogrammed imagery without permission or regard to sovereignty of second or third countries.

For your quick reference, we have attached a copy of the September 1971 recommendations of the NSAM 156 Committee.



Major, USAF  
Assistant Deputy Director  
for Plans and Policy

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1 Attachment

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Recommendations

1. NASA should be authorized to employ--and release photographs acquired by--the proposed earth terrain camera. Prior to the launching of SKYLAB, present procedures should be followed with respect to precluding photography of sensitive areas, and present screening procedures should be followed prior to any release of photography acquired by SKYLAB. In addition, use of the camera should be subject to review by the 40 Committee of international factors existing immediately prior to the launch. Since this camera was not mentioned in the SKYLAB announcement of flight opportunity and since adverse reaction might be occasioned if plans to use the camera were not announced on a timely basis, NASA should take such routine steps as may be necessary to make known the fact that, barring technical difficulties, the camera is planned as part of SKYLAB's equipment.

2. The foregoing authorization should be regarded as an exception to the present 20-meter limitation rather than a general revision of the limitation. This recommendation is based on the understanding that, except for SKYLAB, the 20-meter limitation does not hinder NASA's current programs or forward planning. The recommendation also reflects the view that a general revision might best be undertaken after the initial acquisition and release of space-acquired data about earth resources (as for example by ERTS-A in 1972) has provided a firmer basis for assessing international aspects. In connection with this recommendation, it will be recalled that, as noted in the NSAM 156 Committee's 1966 report, any party at interest can at any time request the Committee to review possible political or security issues which might arise from particular non-military plans, programs, or other related activities concerned with space-based remote sensing.

3. Technical coordination by NASA and DOD of classified and unclassified programs should be continued within the framework of the Manned Spaceflight Policy Committee and its technical

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arm, the Survey Applications Coordinating Committee. It is understood that these arrangements, which were established pursuant to the 1966 deliberations of the NSAM 156 Committee, have been found useful by both NASA and DOD.

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