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THE NRO STAFF

4 October 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ROLAND INLOW, COMIREX

SUBJECT: The NRO Relationship to OPICs

With the turn over of the CIA U-2 aircraft to the Air Force, the NRO has entered a new phase in national reconnaissance operations. The new orientation withdraws the NRO from air breathing reconnaissance operations and assigns the collection systems to the DOD.

The DOD will be tasked to satisfy all nationally directed aircraft reconnaissance missions following the procedures followed for the SR-71 GIANT SCALE missions. For several years, SR-71 aircraft have been flown by SAC and the imagery processed either by SAC or PACAF. OLYMPIC FIRE U-2 missions over Cuba have followed the same concept.

As you know, as of 1 July 1974 the NRO withdrew funding support, which included permanent technical representation and logistical support, from OPIC-A, OPIC-E and NISC which have been used principally by the DOD. This decision was based on the fact that the NRO, per se, did not require the OPICs to accomplish its satellite imagery processing function.

In the future, we propose that the NRO continue to provide support as requested from COMIREX along the following lines. Technical representatives will be available to the three organizations to determine processing status if requested by the COMIREX. The representatives would also physically assist and be consultants during an operational mission until the organization is determined to be self sufficient. The technical support would be provided at no cost to the organizations involved and

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will be borne by the NRO. In respect to logistical support, e.g., film and chemistry, the NRO will provide this type of support during emergencies on a reimbursable basis which will be determined at the time of request for such support.

Through the various R&D efforts sponsored by the NRO, to improve the quality and timeliness of photographic products, our policy will be to continue to share with all cleared agencies, any processes and techniques which will enhance the ability to the intelligence community to assist in the performance of their assigned tasks.

Request that these arrangements be conveyed to COMIREX members. Also, it is requested that the OPIC agreement be modified accordingly.


HAROLD P. WHEELER
Colonel, USAF
Director

cc: DIADC