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2000, dated 3 MAR 77, from Mission to this.
I gave original to Bill Geiger for possible use in his
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SUBJECT: Organizational Considerations for the National Reconnaissance Program

To most effectively manage this Nation's Overhead Reconnaissance Program an organizational apparatus must exist (or be created) that achieves three fundamental objectives:

- (a) It must provide unambiguous guidance and direction to the builders and operators of the overhead collection systems:
- (b) It must be able to augment the dedicated builder/operators with existing space-related resources (e.g. SAMSO, AFSCF, VAFB, etc) that are both essential and economically impossible to duplicate: and
- (c) It must act as a buffer between the dedicated builder/operators on the one hand, and the disparate groups - be they the intelligence customers requirements generators, advanced system planners, or procurement/budget experts - on the other, whose views and contributions, while important, would tend to bias the system building/operating environment and thereby detract from optimum mission accomplishment.

The implications of attempting to achieve these objectives dictate an organizational mechanism that consists of four elements, three of which are currently in place. The National Reconnaissance Organization's Program A (SAFSP), B (CIA), and C ~~comprise~~ comprise the dedicated system builders and operators. Each ~~of these~~ program directors has total responsibility for the research, design, procurement, development, and operation of the NRP projects under his cognizance. The program directors do not however establish or justify the system requirements. Their single unambiguous mission is to build and operate spy satellites. This singleness of purpose coupled with select manning procedures and unique contractor relationships has produced an excellent fleet of intelligence gathering satellites. No change is required to this portion of the NRO management scheme.

The NRO as an entity is currently established as a covert separate agency within DOD. This status must be maintained in order to derive legal procurement authority. The Director of the NRO (DNRO) needs to be a statutory appointee in an overt (cover) position. Within the covert aegis of the NRP he has strong and direct line authority over the three NRO program directors. It is useful for him to have direct line management authority over those activities which support the NRP as well. As these support activities are largely provided by Air Force organizations, the DNRO has traditionally been the Under Secretary of the Air Force. Historically that has been both a workable and a useful arrangement. However, as DNRO the Director is the senior official within DOD responsible to the Secretary of Defense for all satellite reconnaissance programs,

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studies, and activities. He must be able to call upon and receive support assistance from DOD agencies external to the Air Force. Correspondingly he has the obligation of keeping other senior officials with a clear interest in NRP activities (e.g., DDR&E, DTACCS, JCS) apprised of the overhead programs, the direction of their future actions and the like.

This element of the management structure is also in place, however, this should be reaffirmed by updating and reissuing DOD Directive TS 5105.23 dated March 27, 1964 (Atch # 1).

The third management element, also currently in place, the Under Secretary in his covert role must have a dedicated Deputy, Comptroller and Staff. Current cover arrangements, whereby Army, Air Force, Navy, NSA, and CIA personnel appear to be members of the Under Secretary's staff, are adequate and the high level (i.e. SAF) is in many cases expedient.

The fourth critical element needed for effective management of the NRP is absent in today's environment. In 1976 the NRP Executive Committee (EXCOM), the "Board of Directors" that provided overall resource and program guidance to the DNRO, was absorbed into the Committee on Foreign Intelligence (CFI). Unlike the EXCOM the CFI did not focus exclusively on the NRP as separate reviews. Rather it was concerned with allocating resources across the entire National Foreign Intelligence Program (NFIP). The CFI in turn was subsumed into the Policy Review Committee (PRC) in 1977. That Committee has even a broader charter than the CFI before it. The aggregation of the NRP with all other elements of the NFIP has a worthwhile purpose from the National budgetary standpoint and probably should continue. However, it had a deleterious effect on the management of the NRP itself. Because of the expanded scope of the PRC's arena in consolidated reviews of the NFIP, specific NRP issues are largely decided by the PRC(I) Staffs. Although the closeness of contact which the EXCOM had enjoyed was lost in the new mechanism, the level of trade-off concerns was lowered to the point that the integrity of the DNRO's direct line management responsibility was disrupted.

To most effectively manage the NRP I recommend that you reconstitute the NRP EXCOM as a body that would have meetings scheduled periodically to deal solely with the National Reconnaissance Program. The members of the EXCOM might be the same as on the PRC(I) and would convene separately to review and establish the NRP. Regardless of how the EXCOM is constituted, its members must be senior enough to render decisions, not recommendations. The EXCOM would receive staff support from the NRO Staff. The DNRO would present his Director's Report to the EXCOM with all its options and variations. The EXCOM would marry the Intelligence Community requirements with potential NRO-developed options. The PRC(I) members would look to their respective intelligence organizations for the intelligence value

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of the various NRP program alternatives. The DNRO would present and defend the NRP program before the PRC during its deliberations on the total NFIP. Any trade-offs between elements of the NFIP would be made at the program level and if the NRP were levied a dollar-cut, the EXCOM and the DNRO would determine how that cut was applied across specific NRP systems. The DNRO would then implement the program approved by the EXCOM.

This final, critical element of the organizational apparatus will be a key factor in ensuring the overall success of the Overhead Reconnaissance Program.

A final note should be made concerning requirements for overhead systems. As the foregoing describes, the NRO steadfastly avoids becoming embroiled in intelligence requirements issues. By charter, we receive target tasking from the DCI through the National Foreign Intelligence Board (NFIB). If it is determined that overhead systems should play a greater role in operational or tactical areas, no organizational changes are required within the NRO. Rather a change to the requirement establishment mechanism would be in order. For instance, tactical (DOD) requirements could be consolidated within DOD to ensure a stronger position at the NFIB table. Alternatively, the charter could be changed to provide for the NRO's acceptance of tasking requirements from both the NFIB and whatever DOD group emerges to consolidate the tactical requirements. We would prefer the former, but could respond to either option. If a greater tactical role for overhead systems is chosen, however, it would make sense to give the CJCS some role on the EXCOM in order to ensure system design responsiveness to tactical considerations.

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