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

THE NRO STAFF

23 April 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, OJCS

SUBJECT: Policy Provisions for Operational Use of
National Reconnaissance Programs ~~(TS-B)~~

(~~TS~~) Thank you for your memorandum of 6 March on this subject (~~TS~~ 5897/76). I agree that we should pursue the issues related to the use of NRP satellites during crisis or war, and the attendant problems associated with such eventualities.

(~~TS~~) In response to a request from Deputy Secretary Ellsworth's Office, we recently put together a paper which attempts to bound and define this area of mutual interest. A copy is attached for your information and to serve as a point of departure for further discussion between our staffs.

(~~TS~~) The NRO currently operates all NRP assets. Other elements of the intelligence community define and prioritize requirements and provide detailed tasking of our resources which we implement against intelligence targets. There presently is no national policy for any organization other than the NRO to operate NRP assets in crisis or war and I do not see a need or requirement for such a policy. In time of crisis or war, however, it may be desirable or necessary to alter the method by which requirements are set and tasking decided in peacetime. There is currently no clear policy governing transition of these responsibilities under such circumstances. I strongly support the need to define the procedures to be applied in such cases.

(U) The focal point on my Staff for interfacing with your office is ~~TS~~

1 Attachment
National/Tactical Asset Plan
(~~TS~~ 712-76)

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NATIONAL/TACTICAL ASSET PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Purpose.

This point outline plan defines the changes in tasking, control/operation, and resource management of national intelligence assets as they would transition from a national/peacetime to a crisis/tactical environment.

B. Assumptions.

1. It is assumed that the intelligence assets being considered are those which are now used primarily in support of U.S. national-level decisions concerning overall national security issues.

2. A crisis/tactical environment is assumed to be one requiring intelligence support for both national policy and military operations.

C. Background.

1. Many national intelligence assets were not developed for tactical/crisis environments and are neither designed nor deployed to respond with sufficient timeliness. They do not possess the capacity and survivability which would provide the availability and reliability needed. They have never been employed in a conflict in which U.S. forces were actively engaged. As such, rapid transition to a crisis/tactical mode may not be appropriate in all cases...

2. It may be possible to incorporate additional capability into existing systems, or it may be necessary to redesign those systems to enhance tactical support applications. The organizational and funding implications of modifying current and projected efforts to support tactical requirements, however, have not been fully addressed.

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D. Approach.

1. Changes in control involving operational command of systems are not desirable, especially during times of crisis and hostilities. Therefore, there should be no changes in the arrangements for tasking, control/operation, and resource management when national assets transition to a crisis/tactical environment. The tasking mechanism must be able to respond effectively in a wide range of environments and should be regularly exercised in normal times.

2. The changes outlined below are some of the actions required to assure that the national assets selected for this application can provide adequate intelligence in crisis/tactical environments. Amplification concerning each is included in the Discussion.

II. CHANGES REQUIRED.

A. Tasking.

1. Contingency tasking plans.
2. More specific and timely generation of requirements.
3. Resolution, with greater rapidity, between the many competing and conflicting requirements.

B. Control/Operation.

1. Increased timeliness of response and product dissemination.
2. Augmentation and relocation of some assets.
3. Reliable contingency operations plans.
4. Rapid user feedback.
5. Mission planning improvements.
6. Cooperative collection development.
7. Downgrading of classified products, if required.

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8. Rapid assessment of tasking impact on the assets.

C. Resource Management.

1. Increased manning and funding, if necessary.

III. DISCUSSION.

A. Tasking.

1. Contingency tasking plans - A system of priorities must be established to determine which national assets could support tactical users and then to determine which assets will be used. Plans must be developed to allow information to be generated for retasking in a quick-reaction mode or targeting of special areas. These plans must be realistically exercised in peacetime to ensure their effectiveness in crisis or wartime.

2. Specific and timely collection requirements - Users must become more familiar with the systems, their collection capabilities, and their limitations. Requirements must be specified more rapidly and in greater detail, if possible, with the associated rationale arguments in order to allow appropriate prioritization and efficient employment of intelligence collection assets.

3. Improved generation of requirements - Faster resolution of competing and conflicting requirements, assignment of associated priorities, and forwarding to control points will be required to meet user timeliness needs. It should be determined whether data applicable to relatively long-range operational planning is on file or if data is in processing channels; if so, these could be utilized without need for immediate retasking.

B. Control/Operation.

1. Timely response and product dissemination - The timeliness with which intelligence products are delivered requires improvement. Some systems provide more timely data than others. Comprehensive analysis of this aspect is required. Deficiencies must be remedied by operational and procedural changes.

2. Asset augmentation and relocation - Control transfer and coverage augmentation for some assets will be required to provide simultaneously long-term dedicated coverage and exploitation of particular targets, as well as the capacity to satisfy

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crisis/tactical requirements.

... adjusted to increase coverage of some targets at the expense of others. The number and location of collectors also affect the response time from the receipt of tasking data to production of intelligence, since timeliness is dependent on relocation time (if necessary) and frequency of revisit to the area of interest.

3. Contingency operations plans - Contingency plans for joint operations should be formulated for cooperative collection (see para. B.6) and for increased manning (see para. C.1), if required. Such plans must be realistically exercised in peacetime.

4. Rapid feedback by users - Provisions for timely communications links should be established between various echelons and operational collection sites to provide feedback on the fulfillment of requirements or other needs.

5. Improved mission planning - For planning purposes, the tactical user of intelligence products should know at least one day in advance the collection schedule for his local area of interest. Mission planning improvements will be required at some operating sites to respond expeditiously to retasking.

7. Security relaxation - Dissemination of products derived from intelligence collectors must be at as low a classification level as possible, consistent with predetermined security plans, to ensure full and timely utilization of data.

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8. Rapid impact assessments - The effects of tasking collection assets and the associated tactical requirements which are not being met should be determined. This information must be obtained more expeditiously when assets are being utilized at full capability.

C. Resource Management.

Augmented resources - Increased resources could be required. Costs in equipment and manpower to support tactical requirements could be identified, if necessary.

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