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15 June 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR The Deputy Director (Research), CIA

SUBJECT: (TS) NRO Satellite Operations Office

In regard to our agreement that the NRO staff should be brought into a single office located as closely as possible to the DNRO, I believe that the satellite operations function requires early resolution. There are different methods in use for each of the satellite reconnaissance projects which are currently in operation: CORONA-M is being handled by the operations staff at Langley, and ~~SECRET~~ <sup>1047</sup> is being handled by an entirely different group on the west coast.

Although there will be some variation in the detailed procedure for different projects, there are important problems common to all, and the basic function to be performed by the NRO staff is essentially the same for all. It would seem, therefore, that all satellite projects of the NRP should be handled in the same manner by a single operations unit of the NRO staff. In general, the functions to be handled by this staff would be those necessary to maintain the NRO interface with both program requirements and users of program results under the close supervision of the DNRO. These functions would include mission planning from the standpoint of specifying desired target coverage, desired on-orbit target program options (to the extent that such options are possible), and approval of the actual mission target program and options prepared by the Program Director's personnel on the west coast. The operations staff would also make all on-orbit selection between target coverage options, based on target weather situation or intelligence factors.

It would seem that the establishment of this aspect of the NRO staff can best be accomplished in the following manner:

a. In view of the experience gained in the operational aspects of the CORONA project, the nucleus of the satellite operations unit of the NRO staff should be composed of CORONA operations personnel, and the CORONA procedures used as a general guide in the development of procedures for other NRP projects.

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b. The present CORONA operations staff should take over similar responsibility for all NRP satellite projects and should endeavor to be in full operation as soon as possible. Necessary additional personnel would be provided on a priority basis as soon as the specific need is identified.

c. Concurrently with the establishment of these operational procedures, the facilities requirements should be determined for co-locating this aspect of the NRO staff with the other NRO staff personnel in a single Pentagon office near the DNRO, and the move carried out as soon as these facilities are ready. Procedures would, of course, include full operational information flow to the Agency after the move by use of the secure teletype net. In the event that the move should affect CORONA operations personnel who are performing some additional non-satellite duties, necessary replacement personnel would be provided.

If you concur, I propose that the personnel detailed to work out all aspects of this problem be instructed to do so along the lines outlined herein. Although the determination of detailed procedures for such projects undoubtedly will require several months, the details and procedures of all projects that are in or quite near the flight phase should be worked out on a priority basis in a relatively short time, and the actual establishment of a single, effective NRO staff completed as soon as possible.

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Joseph V. Charyk  
Under Secretary of the Air Force