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

THE NRO STAFF

4 September 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PLUMMER

SUBJECT: Security Breach

The Summer issue of Studies in Intelligence was distributed yesterday. It contains a SECRET level article referencing the NRO and SIGINT satellites. The PFIAB alerted us to the article and asked us whether or not the NRO and SIGINT satellites were now SECRET information. We obtained a copy of the publication and the paragraph of interest is attached.

We informally made inquiry to the Special Security Center at the CIA to determine what action would be taken with respect to amending the security breach. No action apparently is intended. We believe that the article constitutes a revolutionary departure from existing security policy because the decompartmentation was expressly limited by the President to photo satellites although the door was left open for the DCI to formally request additional decompartmentation. The memo at the right requests that formal guidance be issued to the community so that the new action may be clearly understood.



J.E.L.

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Looking at the work content of the SIGINT Committee is not the whole story, because one needs to understand the environment in which these affairs are conducted. The National Security Agency (NSA) is a huge organization, and it is singularly preoccupied with the collection and processing of SIGINT. The NSA member represents a production organization, while the other members represent user organizations. NSA, for the most part, tries to avoid explicit direction of its work. It prefers to get tasking in the most general terms possible. The users—State, CIA, DIA, and the Services—would like to be as restrictive as possible, and tend to write tasking documents in great detail. There results a tug-of-war between NSA and the other members over many of the issues discussed in the committee. Usually the committee resolves the issue by doing that which committees do best—finding a compromise solution acceptable to both sides.

There is a similar relationship between the representative of NRO and the committee members. NRO is a huge organization, too—not in numbers of people, but in the fact that it exercises great control over a large share of the intelligence budget. Overhead sensors used to collect SIGINT are procured with money doled out by NRO to the agencies managing the particular sensor programs. There results a different sort of tug-of-war, in which NRO tries to get the committee to specify requirements for SIGINT data in general terms. But the user organizations would like to know how NRO proposes to satisfy their requirements, and in so doing inevitably get involved in the details of the design and capabilities of the satellite collectors. Some of the committee members represent both user groups and satellite project management teams, and this causes additional trauma.

One of the most difficult documents for the committee to get out is its annual statement to the USIB of the 5-year guidance for the SIGINT portion of the national reconnaissance program. There is no requirement that the 5-year guidance take into account the availability of funds to satisfy the requirement, and if the committee chose to be completely irresponsible, it would merely put out a "wish list" of all the things it would be nice to get. Fortunately, the committee has tried to inject some realism into the process, by doing such things as putting requirements in priority order, identifying those requirements whose satisfaction would result in changes in the national reconnaissance program, and estimating their cost impact. Even so, the process is not without defects. It has not been possible so far to interleave COMINT, ELINT and telemetry needs into a single priority list. This makes for great difficulty for those who have to make choices between costly overhead collection sensors which specialize in one or another form of SIGINT.

An even more fundamental problem is the one alluded to earlier, the lack of a system for matching the value of intelligence to the cost of its collection. The SIGINT Committee, in doing the 5-year guidance, has problems in making authoritative choices of the most cost-effective programs. It must screen proposed requirements collected from analytic organizations, and it has no guarantee that they have been submitted with a consciousness of their cost impact. The degree to which the final document is useful to the policy level therefore is very dependent on the maturity and good judgment of the committee members.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

October 30, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: BYEMAN Security Compromises

Since its inception, the National Reconnaissance Program and all of its activities have been considered covert and not acknowledged by the U.S. Government. In recent months I have been concerned by numerous references to the National Reconnaissance Program and its activities outside covert channels. I recognize that there are problems in trying to maintain an organization as large and as mature as the NRO completely covert. I am aware that there are increasing pressures for easing or even abolishing the special caveats placed around the NRO.

The most recent case in point is the unclassified statement which appeared in the Congressional Record of October 12, 1973 in which the National Reconnaissance Office was acknowledged (Atch). I would appreciate your assessment of the impact of this breach of BYEMAN security and how we should react to it. I believe, however, that this is another manifestation of a growing problem and suggest that the overall subject of covert security for the NRP be looked at. I would be pleased to have my Staff work with yours to make recommendations in this area.

John L. McLucas
John L. McLucas

1 Attachment
Extract of Congressional Record

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM

Filmer.

If this gets
sent (may not be),
need a copy for
Don Cook & SAHUS
please.

Please attach copies of
the offending document
"blacked in dated" to
the ASD(I) & back of
copies of the letter.

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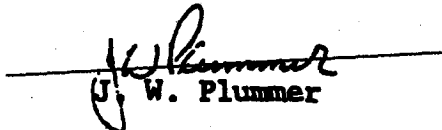
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WASHINGTON, D C

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: SIGINT Satellite Decompartmentation

I have reviewed the recently published issue of Studies in Intelligence which contains an article entitled "Confessions of a former USIB Committee Chairman" by David S. Brandwein. On page 48 there is a SECRET level discussion on the NRO and SIGINT collectors. Since this represents a significant decompartmentation action on its face, I believe that formal guidance to the community should be issued as rapidly as possible so that there is a clear understanding of the limits of the further decompartmentation.


J. W. Plummer

cc: SecDef
ASD(I)

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WASHINGTON, D C

THE NRO STAFF


September 5, 1974

NOTE FOR MR. PLUMMER

We have attempted to work this at a security staff level, however, as Bud indicates in paragraph 2 of his memo (TAB A) to you, it appears that no one is planning to take any action. In addition to the phone call from the PFIAB Staff we have had a contact from AF Intelligence on the subject.

It does not appear that the CIA Staff desires to approach Mr. Colby. Since he personally is still charged with maintaining sources and methods security, he should be made aware of the problem. In the past the DNRO has requested of the DCI clarification of the security policy, so that a precedent does exist. I have attached a most recent example of this (TAB B).

If you have reservations on sending the memo on the right, I suggest that you discuss the subject with Mr. Colby on the telephone.


JOHN E. KULPA, JR.
Brigadier General, USAF
Director

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