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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

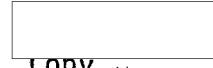
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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NRO review(s) completed.



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NASA Review Completed.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: William J. Porter
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

SUBJECT: Review of SKYLAB Photographic Flight Plans for
Utilization of Earth Terrain Camera

I have reviewed the draft paper you sent to me on 22 February and agree in general with a recommendation to the 40 Committee that the flight plans proposed by NASA be approved, subject to review by the 40 Committee immediately prior to launch and screening of acquired photography prior to public release. I do think, however, that we should also begin a study now to establish some guidelines which can be followed in this screening process and to determine alternative ways of handling the acquired photography with a view toward minimizing the risk of unfavorable international reaction. In addition, I think it would be timely to begin a more general review of what US policy should be with regard to the photographing of sovereign states. I realize that an inter-agency group working under the charter of NSSM 72 is currently considering this question, but I think this issue is important enough and has enough interaction with our reconnaissance programs to warrant a special group specifically chartered and structured for this task.

Therefore, I propose the following be added to the recommendation on page 2 of the draft:

"To reduce the risk associated with public release of the high quality Earth Terrain Camera pictures and to provide guidance for the post-flight screening to make it consistent with and supportive of long range national policy on remote sensing, two studies should be initiated under the auspices of the NSC:

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1. A review of US policy on remote sensing of other sovereign states to reflect (a) current knowledge about the value of photography for resource and economic use and (b) recent views on US economic interests abroad.

2. A study of alternative procedures for publicizing, handling and disseminating the Skylab photographs with a view to minimizing the risk of unfavorable international reaction to the release of these pictures."

I have attached revisions of pages 6-8 which would make the body of the draft consistent with this addition to the recommendation.

SIGNED

James R. Schlesinger
Director

Attachments:
As Stated

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Substitutions for Pages 6, 7, 8 of State Department Draft

legal as well as the technical issues raised by remote sensing by satellite, thirty-eight nations and two international agencies have participated in the ERTS-1 research program. Many others, including the Soviet Union, have pressed forward to obtain ERTS-1 imagery. There has been no sharp criticism of the operational details of the flight of ERTS-1, and there have been no "outraged" protests either against any of the ERTS-1 imagery or against the release of this imagery to the general international public. Indeed, there has been ready and in some instances enthusiastic acceptance of these arrangements in the context of this experimental program.

Recognizing the Research and Development nature of this first remote sensing effort, the international community has shown a willingness to overlook for the time being some of the political, legal, and economic problem areas which have been of intense concern to a number of states. We believe the experimental character of SKYLAB has also been recognized and will secure a similar moratorium on the difficult problems. But the heightened sensitivity to the inherent issues of sovereignty, proprietary rights, control, etc., that arise in the dissemination of earth resources sensing data which appeared during the recent sessions of the UN Working Group on Remote Sensing in New York suggests that the international community may not be willing to extend its acceptance of experimental activities into the operational phases of remote sensing. This international concern about remote sensing and the particular issues which it raises will have to be dealt with before long. While they need not interfere with NASA's plans for SKYLAB experiments, actions should be taken now to study what our national policies should be

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in this regard and how the photography acquired by SKYLAB should be disseminated.

The photography that will be acquired by the high resolution Earth Terrain Camera on board SKYLAB is appreciably better than the imagery produced by ERTS-1, and the improvement in the quality of the photography may be sufficiently dramatic as to arouse some international reaction. To reduce the risk of this happening, steps have been taken to inform the space and scientific communities of other nations of our plans to fly the Earth Terrain Camera on board SKYLAB, so the utilization of this equipment should come as no surprise to the specialists. Additional actions will be taken prior to launch, particularly in relation to the policy level officials of foreign governments, to publicize our intentions and thus minimize any public reactions engendered by surprise.

Moreover, the time-sequencing of the photographic flight plans are safeguards to allow an assessment of international reaction based on photos taken over North America and a modification of subsequent plans if necessary. The photography to be acquired during the first manned mission is almost entirely of the US, Canada, and Mexico. The first coverage of any of the "sensitive areas" will not occur until Mission 2, beginning in August.

Finally, once the photographic flight plans for SKYLAB are approved, the photography program is still subject to two further reviews: a final assessment of the international political factors immediately prior to

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launch and a post-launch screening of whatever photography is acquired before it is released to the public. Thus photography that may become sensitive in the months ahead (whether because of the developing international scene or because of the "sensational" nature of the particular imagery acquired) can be handled in a way appropriate to the situation. However, to prepare ourselves for the various contingencies that may be encountered, and to provide guidance to those who will do post-launch "screening", we propose that a study be started now to define alternative ways of handling the SKYLAB photos in the event that future international events make it desirable to withhold substantial portions from public release.

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