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TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2002/05/20 : CIA-RDP79B01709A002000050028-6

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TCS-7043-66
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10 August 1966

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Recommended CIA Position on Recommendations
6.a. and b. of the NSAM 156 Committee Report
of 11 July 1966

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1. This memorandum recommends to you in paragraph 2 a CIA position with regard to Recommendations 6.a. and 6.b. of the NSAM 156 Committee Report of 11 July 1966. Recommendations 6.a. and 6.b. of this report asks USIB to review:

a. The matter of lifting codeword controls over references to a US operational satellite reconnaissance program in order to permit explaining at the SECRET or TOP SECRET level to Government personnel concerned with non-military satellite earth sensing programs the reasons for certain limitations on the areas in which they should concern themselves.

b. The matter of either selective removal of certain photography from codeword control for classified use by selected NASA and other cleared personnel or, alternatively, the clearance of an increased number of personnel for codeword materials.

2. We recommend that CIA take the position that henceforth the existence of US satellite reconnaissance programs be removed from the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment and be classified TOP SECRET or SECRET, the choice to be made in the light of security and practical handling considerations. However, information and photography derived from US satellite reconnaissance programs should remain within the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment.

3. Our reasons for this position are that:

a. The purpose of security control over the existence of satellite reconnaissance programs is no longer to prevent adverse Soviet reaction, as was the case in the U-2 case in May 1960. The purpose now is to prevent speculation and pressure for more detailed information about these programs by uncleared governmental and contractor officials who have built fairly good surmises about satellite reconnaissance from numerous unauthorized

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published references in the press and elsewhere. TOP SECRET or SECRET classification of the existence of satellite reconnaissance programs will put this matter in the proper light: that such programs are going on; that they are valuable to national security; and that they are not to be discussed publicly or with uncleared personnel.

b. Pressures for more information about these programs and the need to maintain continued security over the fact of these programs will increase in the future. Release to the public of NASA GEMINI photography, continuing references in the press to satellite reconnaissance, general knowledge of Soviet satellite reconnaissance programs at the SECRET classification, and increasing numbers of organizations and individuals becoming involved in all phases of satellite reconnaissance all argue for acknowledgment of US satellite reconnaissance on a broader basis than the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment permits. Acknowledgment at the TOP SECRET or SECRET level will reduce pressure on the TALENT-KEYHOLE classification which needs to be preserved to protect the information gained from these programs.

c. There is documentary precedent for this position in the TALENT Sanitization Manual (COMOR-D-7/44 - Jan 1966), approved by COMOR and the USIB Security Committee and noted by USIB, which concedes that the existence of a satellite reconnaissance capability is less sensitive than its performance.

4. Certain primarily administrative problems attend acceptance of the recommended CIA position:

a. Not all persons cleared for TOP SECRET or SECRET have a need-to-know in regard to satellite reconnaissance. A double screening and controlled dissemination will be required to prevent inadvertent disclosures.

b. Wider knowledge of the programs will not stem further questions about the degree of success achieved or the technology of the systems used. These details will need to be kept in the TALENT-KEYHOLE compartment and an understanding of that need may have to be part of the need-to-know clearance.

c. If the TOP SECRET classification is selected for the existence of these programs, administrative and security document handling problems will increase. Accounting procedures for TOP SECRET documents, particularly in the military, are more complicated than those for documents in the TALENT-KEYHOLE system. This will raise pressures for further decontrol to the SECRET level.

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5. On balance, we believe the advantages of decontrol of the existence of satellite to TOP SECRET or SECRET outweigh the problems noted above. An evident capability can be acknowledged within proper controls, and uninformed speculation and questioning and pressure on the information gained can be reduced, at least within the Government.

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JAMES J. HITCHCOCK
Chief

DDI/Collection Guidance Staff

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