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DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation
Washington, DC 20505

ICS-4557/88
14 April 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR:
Legislative Division
Office of Congressional Affairs

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SUBJECT: International Security and Satellite Monitoring
Act of 1988, H.R. 4036

1. The following comments on the subject bill are prepared from the perspective of the COMIREX Staff.

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2. The stated objectives of the bill are unquestionably admirable, but the indicated study procedure and the ultimate concept of an international remote sensing program would have a major adverse impact on U.S. intelligence sources and methods. This of course would represent a major concern of the DCI. Furthermore, the bill would shift the development of major national policy on key defense and foreign relations issues away from the Executive Department officials who have the primary responsibilities for these specific matters, namely the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense.

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3. The power to examine and report on these extremely sensitive matters is placed in the hands of an independent commission, with the principal federal officials responsible for such matters relegated to only advisory positions. The Commission's proposed voting membership structure would specifically exclude all federal officers and employees. The bill stipulates that--notwithstanding any other provision of law--the voting members are to be given full access to Executive Department information, including classified information. To facilitate access to the latter, security investigations of Commission members are to be expedited. The proposed study would include especially sensitive information about current and future intelligence collection systems. Past experience is that the potential for leaks and exposure of sensitive intelligence data and information under such circumstances is extremely high.

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4. While the text of this proposed Bill is couched in terms of an initial study, it is clear that the ultimate objective is to address and move toward the concept of a multinational or international remote sensing program. The implementation of such a concept would directly impact intelligence sources and methods, for which the DCI is statutorily responsible. These direct impacts could, and probably would, include issues concerning the transfer of sensitive technology on classified remote sensing systems, control and processing operations, and the methodology used in exploiting derived data. [redacted]

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5. To reduce the possibility of such major adverse effects, the preferred Administration option would be to oppose the passage of this Bill on the grounds that it is contrary to the national interest, e.g., it would weaken national security and would undercut U.S. private sector development by further stimulating foreign activities in satellite remote sensing. [redacted]

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6. Another Administration option would be to attempt to restructure the study effort so that it is executed by or under the aegis of the responsible officials of the Federal Government--namely, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of State, and the DCI. [redacted]

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7. The Plans and Policy Office of the Intelligence Community Staff is aware of and endorses the above comments. However, [redacted] has some additional comments which he will transmit separately. We are aware of and endorse the comments that [redacted] the TCO/CIA, provided to you in his 7 April memorandum. [redacted]

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Chief, Executive Staff
& Executive Secretary

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