

MEMORANDUM

INFORMATION - 4124

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

REFER TO DOS

NASA REVIEWED 12 APR 2011 NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

SECRET

June 16, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM:

MICHAEL GUHIN

SUBJECT:

Meeting with General Crow on
GEOS-3 Satellite

DOS REVIEWED 24-Mar-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

General Crow of NASA is meeting with you this afternoon to discuss the GEOS-3 satellite.

GEOS-3 is a NASA scientific satellite launched in April. It will, inter alia, measure the gravitation anomalies in the ocean areas. This information is of scientific interest, but it also could (1) bear on the future development of a highly accurate SLBM, and (2) assist in submarine navigation. DOD intends to use the data for such purposes.

Shortly before GEOS-3 was launched, and after a full complement of domestic and foreign scientists were involved in the program, NASA and DOD made arrangements whereby NASA would transfer certain data to DOD and DOD would classify these data and control their release.

Secretary Kissinger directed the Under Secretaries Committee (USC) to conduct a study of the NASA/DOD arrangements since this would be the first instance in which any data acquired in space by NASA for its own programs were classified, and since State expressed serious reservations about the classification arrangements. The USC study, along with agency views, is now being staffed here and will be forwarded for the President's consideration shortly after David Elliott's return on June 27.

You may wish to inform General Crow that the report is still being staffed and that ~~all views will be carefully~~ considered. For your information, the breakdown of agency views is as follows:

- DOD and NASA believe that their arrangement to have DOD classify certain data from GEOS-3 should be approved because (1) DOD believes it is militarily significant data which is presently not otherwise available to the USSR; and (2) NASA believes it can accommodate DOD's concerns without compromising the basic scientific objectives of the program.

OSD REVIEWED 22-Mar-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

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- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, one of the principal users of data from GEOS-3, is opposed to the NASA/DOD classification arrangement since it would remove important areas from general study, and would set a precedent for restrictions on subsequent satellites to measure ocean properties.

- State is opposed to the classification arrangement on grounds that (1) DOD's security concerns are unfounded (the USSR would need to make major technical improvements across-the-board in its SLBM program before GEOS-3 data would become useful and, if they did so, the additional effort to obtain GEOS-3 type data by independent means would be comparatively inconsequential); and (2) departure from the policy of open dissemination of US civil space information would impair the international credibility of our civil space program.

cc: Jan Lodal

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