

5 December 1961

Functions and Responsibilities
of the
National Reconnaissance Office ~~(NS)~~

References:

- (a) Secretary of Defense TOP SECRET memorandum, subject:
~~(NS)~~ Assistant for Reconnaissance, dated September 6, 1961,
with attached Department of Defense-Central Intelligence
Agency Agreement.
- (b) Deputy Secretary of Defense TOP SECRET memorandum,
subject: Space Vehicle Electronics Intelligence Program,
dated October 20, 1961, with attachment.

Definitions:

- NRO - National Reconnaissance Office, as established by
reference (a).
- NRP - National Reconnaissance Program, as defined by reference
(a) to consist of all overt and covert overflight projects
for intelligence, geodesy, and mapping photography and
electronic signal collection.
- DOD/AR - Assistant for Reconnaissance to the Secretary of Defense,
established and delegated to the Under Secretary of the
Air Force by reference (a); Director of the Department of
Defense part of the NRO.

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- DDP/A - Deputy Director (Plans) of the Central Intelligence Agency;
Director of the Agency part of the NRO.
- STC - Satellite Test Center - Air Force operations center at
Sunnyvale, California for the on-orbit control of satellites.
- AOC - Aircraft Operations Center - Air Force operations office within
the Pentagon for control of special aircraft operations.
- MOG - Mission Operations Group - A part of the NRO in the
Pentagon which plans specific missions, determines targets
to be covered by specific missions, and exercises NRO operational
control during missions, through the STC or AOC.

Policy:

The following plan outlines basic policy for the establishment of functions and responsibilities within the National Reconnaissance Office to insure that the particular talents, experience and capabilities within the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency are fully and most effectively utilized in the establishment, management and conduct of the National Reconnaissance Program.

1. Management.

a. The technical management responsibility for all NRP projects (overt and covert) is assigned to the DOD/AR.

(1) To provide for full use of available capabilities and resources, and to provide for interface with data exploitation equipment development by agencies outside the NRO, Navy and Army representatives will be assigned, on a full-time basis, to appropriate positions within the NRO under the DOD/AR. They will be technically qualified in electronic

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signal collection work and in mapping and geodesy, respectively, and have NRO project responsibilities in these areas.

(2) A firm liaison channel between the NRO and NSA will be established as an adjunct to the technical management structure of signal collection projects, and the conduct of such projects carried out in accordance with the NSA responsibilities described in reference (b). Planning will encompass maximum utilization of the Navy technical resources to support the electronic signal collection programs.

b. Financial management

(1) With respect to funds, the DOD/AR will be responsible for all projects of the NRP. Funds will be allocated on an individual project basis and will appear as appropriately classified line items in the Air Force budget.

(2) With respect to contracts, all NRP project contracts will be the responsibility of DOD/AR, as a necessary corollary to the assignment of technical management responsibility to DOD/AR. However, covert ("black") contracts which provide cover for or enhance the security of specific projects may be the responsibility of the DDP/A when the DOD/AR and the DDP/A agree that such action offers a preferable route. This includes establishment of dummy corporations, etc., to provide cover for covert operations, and any other contractual action which is necessary for the NRP and which can be provided in a preferred manner by the Agency.

2. Security. The DDP/A will be responsible for the overall security policy for the National Reconnaissance Program. Under this overall policy, security of the NRP will be administered for DOD by DOD/AR, through control officers in the JCS, Army, Air Force, and Navy staffs, the DLA and the NSA.

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For the collection programs, final need-to-know validation authority will be the responsibility of DOD/AR.

3. Operations:

a. Scheduling. The mission schedule for all NRP efforts will be the sole responsibility of DOD/AR, including the obtaining of appropriate clearances where required.

b. Mission Operations:

(1) A member of the DOD/AR office will be designated as Chairman of a Mission Operations Group (MOG) which will have Tri-Service, NSA and CIA representation on a full-time basis. The MOG will have available the complete schedules and technical capabilities of all of the sensor systems of all NRP projects, and accounts of the complete coverage obtained by all sensor systems of these projects, on a continuous basis. This group will establish the pre-launch targeting selection for all reconnaissance projects of the NRP, and will transmit this information to a secure operations control room at the STC for satellite missions, and to the AOC for aircraft missions. The operations control room at the STC will control all satellite missions, responding to operational decisions from the MOG in Washington, and engineering decisions from the project director at the STC.

(2) The officer in charge of the operations control room at the STC or AOC will be sole responsible agent to DOD/AR to assure necessary actions with the mission vehicle as well as with the ground environment to maximize the probability of carrying out the mission in conformance with instructions of the MOG. Any required functions relating to vehicle and

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payload operation during a mission, such as piggy-backs, orbit or route changes, filters, etc., will be the sole responsibility of the officer in charge of the STC or AOC control room.

(3) To provide a basis for the continuous operation of the MOG, there will be in the Pentagon a comprehensive display so that the MOG can monitor each mission and make decisions based on all factors involved, such as weather, target coverage, change in mission situation, political situation, or new intelligence data. The initial decision as to which targets to cover with each specific mission will be made by the MOG and will be based on information from this display. The MOG will make all targeting decisions during satellite missions, and give appropriate instructions to the project director at the STC in this regard. Decisions based on engineering factors will be provided by the project director at the STC or AOC and will override conflicting instructions from the MOG. Responsibility for all functions of the MOG will rest with the DOD/AR, who will provide the chairman of the MOG.

c. Formatting. The DOD/AR will be responsible for the formatting of the collected NRP product as follows:

(1) Photographic formatting will include the initial chemical processing, titling, production and delivery to the users as specified by the USIB.

(2) Electronic signal data formatting will include the decommutation, conversion, technical correction and reconstruction of the collected signal data to yield a usable collection product. DOD/AR will deliver the formatted collection product, together with associated data

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necessary for exploitation, to the NSA or other user as specified by the USIB.

d. Engineering Analysis. The DOD/AR will be responsible for engineering analysis of all collection systems to correct the problems that exist on the operating system as well as to provide information for new systems.

4. The primary responsibility for advanced plans (post CY 1962) for all NRP projects is assigned to the DOD/AR.

5. The USIB will establish or validate all requirements for the NRP and establish broad project and overall target priorities. However, they will not determine schedules, or determine targets for particular missions. COMOR will not be involved with the NRO or NRP, except as required to advise USIB in the determination of NRP requirements and broad priorities. Selection of targets for specific missions and target decisions during conduct of missions will be made by the NRO by means of the MOG previously described, using USIB requirements, priorities and target lists.

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Discussion of National Reconnaissance Office
Basic Policy

Reference: ~~TSSH~~-paper entitled Functions and Responsibilities of the
National Reconnaissance Office ~~(TS)~~; dated December 5, 1961

Objectives:

The basic objective leading to the establishment of the NRO has been to formally organize certain elements of the DOD and the CIA in a manner which will insure that the particular talents, experience and capabilities within these two organizations will be fully and most effectively utilized in the establishment, management and conduct of the NRP. The objective of the paper referenced above is to establish basic policy concerning the functions and responsibilities within the NRO, to assure that the functioning of the Office is based upon the assignment of clear and specific responsibilities; it provides for joint participation but avoids assignment of split project responsibilities.

Plan:

The plan of action contemplated is to establish the basic policy which is descriptive of the eventual functioning of the NRO, without regard to previously established specific projects which, at present, may not conform to this policy. Following this, it is proposed that the individual projects not presently in conformance with this policy be examined separately and decisions made in each case concerning the transition from the present organization and responsibilities to those set forth in the referenced policy paper, or to exceptions which may be permitted for various reasons. Accordingly, the basic policy is discussed

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in the following paragraph, followed by a discussion of the transition period and exceptions which affect specific projects.

Basic Policy:

The basic policy described by the referenced paper represents an eventual assignment of functions and responsibilities based upon the inherent capabilities of the CIA and DOD. It is also based on consideration of present capability of the DOD in regard to streamlined management of highly sensitive activities, including the necessary contractual ability to conduct such sensitive projects under special security. It includes consideration of experience gained by DOD personnel while assisting the Agency in the conduct of projects initiated prior to establishment of these DOD capabilities.

The basic policy envisions that the technical management responsibility should be assigned specifically to the DOD/AR. The Agency should not be involved in the research and development of projects within the NRP or in the technical management of these projects. Since technical management includes control of funds and contracts, the responsibility for these is also assigned to the DOD/AR. Provision is made within the basic policy for some contractual action by the Agency which provides cover for or enhances the security of specific projects, when the joint directors of the NRO agree that such action offers a preferable route. In this manner, the basic policy provides for the inclusion in the NRP of any action that is possible under the authorities of the two agencies concerned, while establishing specific assignment of project responsibility for the NRP, consistent with the inherent capabilities and experience of the CIA and the DOD.

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The DDP/A will be responsible for the establishment of overall security for the entire NRP. This will insure that full advantage is taken of Agency experience in covert and sensitive work.

The Agency and various elements of the DOD will all be involved in the operations of the NRP; however, since these operations will involve for the most part DOD personnel, resources, and DOD experience in the planning and carrying out of operational missions, the specific NRO responsibility for operations will be assigned to the DOD/AR. The basic policy provides for the establishment of a Missions Operations Group with membership from the interested agencies under the chairmanship of a member of the DOD part of the NRO. This arrangement insures joint participation while retaining clear and specific assignment of responsibility.

Exceptions, and Transition of Specific Projects:

The following comments pertain to the transition period for certain projects to bring them into conformity with the basic policy, and to some exceptions which should be made in the case of others:

1. Appropriate directives will be prepared to transfer the total technical responsibility for the ARGON, MURAL and CANES (Navy) programs to the DOD/AR. To provide for continuity, and to provide for interface with data exploitation equipment development by agencies outside the NRO, Navy and Army representatives will be assigned, on a full-time basis, to appropriate positions within the NRO under the DOD/AR. They will be technically qualified in electronic signal collection work and in mapping and geodesy, respectively, and have NRO project responsibilities in these areas.

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2. Following transfer of technical management responsibilities for the CANES program, as mentioned above, this program will be managed by the NRO using the same Navy technical resources presently engaged in this program. Contract administration for the CANES program will be delegated to and remain with the Navy through CY 1962 and formatting responsibility will remain with NSA and the Navy through the end of CY 62, by which time this program, as a separate entity, will be completed.

3. In regard to security, the need-to-know responsibility for CORONA, ARGON, MURAL AND CANES will remain as currently constituted until detailed phasing program from the existing security system can be worked out on a project-by-project basis by the security personnel of the NRO.

4. The existing ARGON data exploitation fund requirement will be eliminated as an item of the NRP: The ARGON exploitation equipment and mission will be transferred from the present contractor to Army Map Service, under the operational control of DIA.

5. Since the CORONA program is nearly completed, (two flights remaining) it is excepted from the basic policy and no change will be made in the present arrangements in effect for this program.

6. All other existing projects of the NRP will be transitioned into conformance with the basic policy, at the earliest practicable date, on an individual project-by-project basis, with the pace and details of the transition determined by the Directors of the NRO.

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