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FUNCTIONS NRO

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.

SUBJECT: Clarification of the New NRO Agreement and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recently furnished requirements for these

1. Reference is made to the "Agreement between the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence on Management of the National Reconnaissance Program" signed 13 March 1963 by Messrs McCone and Gilpatric, and to discussions held between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Dr. McMillan on 2 April 1963.

2. This memorandum is to provide suggested discussion items for the meeting to be held between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Mr. McNamara on 8 April 1963 with the intent of clarifying certain aspects of the new NRO agreement referenced above.

3. It is clear from the referenced agreement that the National Reconnaissance Office, as a separate operating agency of the Department of Defense, is responsible for the development, operation, and initial processing of all projects involving the collection of intelligence, mapping, and geodetic information by overflights over "denied" territory. It is not clear from the Agreement, and it was not completely clarified in the discussion between Dr. McMillan and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as to what territories are considered "denied" or who makes the determination that they are classed as "denied" territories.

4. It is clear that the NRO, with its operating responsibilities, will collect intelligence during cold, limited, and general war over such denied territories. It is not clear when and how operational control of the NRO collection forces is transferred to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or other designated agencies, when the denied territories become combat areas by virtue of an escalation from cold to limited or general war. It is not clear under the doctrine of controlled response whether a denied territory becomes a combat area by virtue of escalation, will not suddenly revert to a denied territory for political reasons.

5. It is clear that the Director, NRO reports directly to the Secretary of Defense with guidance provided by the United States Intelligence Board. It is not clear what, if any, responsibilities the Joint Chiefs of Staff have relative to the National Reconnaissance Office or vice versa.

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Control System

~~TOP SECRET~~

6. It is clear that the Director of the NRO is responsible for the planning and conduct of research and development of future national reconnaissance program projects. [It is not clear whether projects such as bomb damage assessment and post-attack reconnaissance are the responsibility of the NRO. It should be noted that the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recently forwarded requirements for these capabilities to the Secretary of Defense. His letter which requested that the Joint Chiefs examine the national reconnaissance program indicated that the NRO would implement such requirements, if approved. This would indicate that bomb damage assessment and post strike reconnaissance systems are to be operated by the NRO.]

7. The points listed above appeared to be the major points which need clarification as to the extent of responsibility of the National Reconnaissance Office. There are, however, many lesser questions. For example, paragraph III B states that the NRO responds directly and solely to the intelligence collection requirements and priorities established by the United States Intelligence Board. Is this a viable system for the Commanders of unified and specified Commands and the JCS in times of increased tension or armed conflict?

8. Paragraph III E and F indicate that users of intelligence information collected will be specified by the USIB. Would this system work satisfactorily for the unified and specified Commands and the JCS in the event of a crisis similar to Cuba?

9. It is noted in paragraph V A 2 that the Director of NRO will establish appropriate liaison with various agencies. There is no provision by which the Director of NRO is charged with keeping the military departments fully informed on the non-intelligence results of the unique space research and development experience which he gains through his operation of the only major space program within the Department of Defense. In fact, he cannot do so unless it is in accordance with the security policy established by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. (Reference paragraph III J)

10. It is noted that neither the referenced Agreement nor the DoD Directive No. TS 5105.23 dated 14 June 1962 which originally established the National Reconnaissance Office defines any responsibilities for the military departments other than to provide support as required by the Director of NRO. In the case of other separate operating agencies of the Department of Defense, there are procedures by which required

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~~TOP SECRET~~

support resources are reviewed by the military departments and, in most cases, by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

11. It is recognized that the National Reconnaissance Program is of the highest national priority and that the NRO has in the past been very successful. It is not the intent of the above questions to argue the concept. The National Reconnaissance Program is growing in size, in capability, and in importance. To insure that it receives maximum possible support, its charter should be clear, understood, and supportable by the JCS.

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