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~~101~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

November 21, 1988

The Honorable David L. Boren, Chairman
Select Committee on Intelligence
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you are aware, over the last year and a half we have conducted an extensive study of the organizational structure of the NRO. While I am convinced that the NRO is extremely effective and responsive to the many needs of the national intelligence community, the dramatically expanding collection requirements, the increasing technical complexity of the targets, the constrained budgets, and the growing diversity of operational users demand that the NRO become even more effective and efficient.

I have discussed the study's recommendations with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, and with their support I am directing the development of implementation plans that would allow us to effect an internal restructuring of the NRO. This planning will include intensive review and resolution of the remaining issues, in order to allow early endorsement by the new Administration.

Many of these internal changes have been specifically designed to respond to suggestions provided by our users. Changes that will be visible to external organizations can be summarized as follows:

The creation of a new, centralized [REDACTED] function to conduct cross-system trades and simulations within the NRO.

The creation of a new User Support function to improve NRO support to the many intelligence community users as well as to the growing community of operational military users. This User Support group will focus and expand NRO support to all users, [REDACTED]

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The current NRO Staff [redacted] will be largely absorbed in these new functions. A senior staff of policy advisers (inspector general, [redacted]) would replace the current NRO Staff.

An interim facility in the Washington area is envisioned to house the buildup of the new functions and senior management as the planning progresses.

The ultimate goal (circa 1991-1992) would be a collocation of all NRO elements-- [redacted] User Support, senior staff, Programs A, B and C--in the Washington, D.C. area.

Let me also summarize what this restructuring will not do:

It will not alter the current structures of Program A (USAF element [redacted]), Program B (CIA element OD&E), or Program C (Navy element [redacted]). They will continue as distinct elements of the NRO.

It will not alter the NRO's cradle-to-grave acquisition and operations approach to collection systems, nor will it change our streamlined management philosophy.

It will not alter daily operations interfaces with users [redacted]

There will be no change in the Defense Reconnaissance Support Program (DRSP) augmentation of NRP systems.

I believe these steps are absolutely essential if the NRO is to remain an effective national agency. These changes do not alter the principles that have been the traditional strength of the NRO, but are specifically designed to respond to your needs, to the needs of the national intelligence community at large, and to the needs of operational military commanders. I am confident you will see distinct improvements in your interface with the NRO as these new functions are brought on line. The resulting consolidated NRO will be more efficient and responsive, and better able to meet the growing demands of the next 25 years.

As part of this organizational review, the issue of the classification of the existence of the NRO was again reviewed, and the consensus is that the NRO should remain a covert organization. Therefore, this information should be kept strictly within [redacted]. I am depending upon your active cooperation in this regard.

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Thank you in advance for your support. I will continue to keep you informed of our progress. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jimmie Hill or Brig Gen [REDACTED] at your earliest convenience.

This letter is also being sent to the House Armed Services Committee, the Defense Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, the Defense Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Sincerely,



E. C. Aldridge, Jr.

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