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~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

JUL 30 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Changing the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) to  
an Overt Organization

The [REDACTED] recommended in March that the "fact of" the NRO be declassified. In accord with your direction at that time, we have been examining the implications of such an action and the specific information that should be released if this step is taken. This letter is a summary of the status of this work, offers my recommendations and seeks your concurrence to proceed further or your redirection.

For background, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) is pressing for declassification. Their authorization bill contains authorization for the NRO described in the unclassified terms of Executive Order 12333. The Committee wants to authorize the NRO explicitly in the bill and plans to amend their bill in September to reveal the NRO in unclassified terms. However, the SSCI will seek the concurrence of the Administration before taking this step. Under the terms of Senate rules, the Committee would recommend declassification and if the President objected, he would have to state that "grave damage" to the nation would result. Such a certification would be difficult in this case.

[REDACTED]

Based on our review of the classification within the NRO, I recommend the following: (1) Declassify the "fact of" the NRO; (2) Declassify a brief mission statement for the NRO (See draft at Attachment 1); (3) Declassify the "fact of" satellite IMINT

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] (4) Acknowl-

edge the NRO as a joint endeavor of the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) and the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) organized as a defense entity which includes both Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Department of Defense (DoD) personnel; (5) Formally identify top-level NRO management by name and function--limited to the Director, Martin C. Faga; the Deputy Director, Jimmie D. Hill; and Deputy Director for Military Support, RADM Dan March. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and, (6) Provide a Pentagon address and establish an NRO Public Affairs Office.

My recommendations attempt to balance concerns about classifying information that realistically cannot be protected, while maintaining an ability to protect matters that must remain classified. Incumbent in this approach are means to enhance the utility of NRO systems for military support, to facilitate appropriate NRO participation in environmental remote sensing activities, and to respond to foreign activities on reconnaissance satellites. [REDACTED]

It is possible that this initiative would be the first step toward becoming even more open. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Those future decisions will be based, in part, on the results of the initial changes. Our assessment to date--which covers security, domestic and foreign reactions, Freedom Of Information Act requests, NRO management practices, NRO restructure, military support, civil remote sensing, and foreign reconnaissance satellites--is summarized in Attachment 2. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] COPY OF [REDACTED]

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Fundamentally, I believe these proposals are reasonable and prudent; [REDACTED] while preserving essential security and improving support to operational military customers.

If you concur, I will complete plans to implement the recommended changes and work with your staffs and others to prepare an announcement. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The need to obtain this level of Administration approval [REDACTED] make it difficult to meet the Congressional desire to act in September. We are prepared to make every effort to do so.

*Martin Faga*

MARTIN C. FAGA

2 Attachments

1. Draft NRO Mission  
[REDACTED]

2. Implications of the Proposed  
Changes [REDACTED]

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