



Office of the Director

~~SECRET//REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, GBR, NZL~~

NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

29 May 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: (S//REL) Declassification of the "Fact of" National Reconnaissance Office Radar Satellite Reconnaissance

(S//REL) The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) has concurred with my implementation plan to declassify the "fact of" National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) radar satellite reconnaissance. The effective date for implementation will be 9 June 2008.

(S//REL) The declassification of NRO radar satellite reconnaissance from SECRET//REL to UNCLASSIFIED is limited to "fact of" only, not to "facts about."

[REDACTED] No formal public announcement is planned.

(U) The declassification implementation plan includes formal notifications to the leadership of Congressional committees with intelligence oversight responsibility, Commonwealth Partners and other appropriate stakeholders. Additionally, the plan provides for security guidance and education, classification guide changes, public affairs and communication plans, procedures and points of contact for questions and to monitor implementation. During the implementation period, all current classification rules will remain in effect.

(U) Should you have any questions concerning this action please contact Mr. Benjamin Gimeno, Deputy Director, NRO, Business Plans and Operations at [REDACTED]

*Scott F. Large*

Scott F. Large

cc:  
Director of National Intelligence

DECL BY: 25X1, 20580528, NRO dated July 2005  
DRV FROM: NRO Classification Guide 6.0, 21 May 2005

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**SUBJECT:** (S//REL) Declassification of the "Fact of" National  
Reconnaissance Office Radar Satellite  
Reconnaissance

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13 August 2012

~~SECRET//TK//NOFORN//25X1~~

## NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

14875 Lee Road

Chantilly, VA 20151-1715

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OCT 01 2009



Office of the  
Principal Deputy Director

25 September 2009

## MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: ~~(S//TK//NF)~~ Approval to Declassify "Fact of" QUILL as Radar Imager

~~(S//TK//NF)~~ Action Requested: Concurrence with my decision to declassify the "fact of" QUILL as an NRO radar imager.

~~(S//TK//NF)~~ Background: QUILL was an experimental Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite, based on the Corona satellite and available SAR hardware, which flew in 1964. Because of diplomatic and security concerns, the brief mission imaged only selected targets within the United States. Those targets could be inspected on the ground to validate the intelligence value of orbital SAR without alerting the Soviets to the capability or touching off diplomatic protests over active illumination of sovereign territory. The mission provided proof-of-concept, but development of the first operational SAR system proceeded slowly. Much of the technology and basic science behind QUILL is already known to the general public.

~~(S//TK//NF)~~ The National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) has received an immediate Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for information about "a satellite program called QUILL, and/or information regarding a satellite launched on 21 December 1964 (from Vandenberg AFB, California) and given the designator 1964087A." Because the program and information this request specifies currently remain classified, we cannot comply with the provisions of the FOIA, including the acknowledgment of documents or its mandated release timeline, without my declassification decision and your concurrence.

~~(S//TK//NF)~~ I am advised that we cannot legally maintain classification of the term "QUILL" and of the fact that it is a radar imager. First, the short-lived program ended 45 years

DECL ON: 25X1, 20590910, RRG dated July 2005  
DRV FROM: NCG 5.0, 21 May 2005

~~SECRET//TK//NOFORN//25X1~~

13 August 2012  
~~SECRET//TK//NOFORN//25X1~~

SUBJECT: ~~(S//TK//NF)~~ Approval to Declassify "Fact of" QUILL as  
Radar Imager

ago, and it would be extremely difficult to argue that its disclosure would cause harm to national security. Second, on 10 April 2008, Director of National Intelligence McConnell approved the NRO's plan to declassify the general "fact of" NRO radar satellite reconnaissance, although QUILL specifically remained classified at that time. Finally, without association with QUILL, the Air Force declassified the Side Looking Mapping Radar payload used by QUILL. Given these facts, I have decided to declassify the "fact of" QUILL and the "fact" that it was a radar imager experiment in response to the current FOIA request.

~~(S//TK//NF)~~ Recommendation: With your concurrence, we will acknowledge the existence of QUILL and treat documents accordingly in response to the immediate FOIA request.

*Betty J. Sapp*  
~~Betty J. Sapp~~  
Betty J. Sapp

cc:  
Director, National  
Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

CONCUR:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dennis C. Blair  
Director of National Intelligence

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date