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Copy 1 of 10

7 January 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: (b)(1)1.5c, (b)(3)
Chairman, Ad Hoc Group Studying
Security of the NRO

SUBJECT : History of NRO Security Breaches

1. This memorandum responds to your request for a history of unauthorized disclosures related to the NRO.
2. There have been eight references to the NRO in the press.

(a) The first mention of the NRO to appear in the public domain was in the New York Times of 22 January 1971 in the fifth of a series of articles by Benjamin Welles exploring the Nixon Administration's style in foreign policy. The article was titled "Foreign Policy: Disquiet Over Intelligence Setup." In a long article, Welles credits the NRO as part of the Defense Intelligence Agency. The exact wording on the NRO is: "Its (DIA) National Reconnaissance Office spends another 1 billion dollars yearly flying reconnaissance airplanes and lofting or exploiting the satellites that constantly circle the earth and photograph enemy terrain with incredible accuracy from 130 miles up."

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(b) The second reference to the NRO was made by Victor Marchetti in a series of radio and TV appearances during the period 21 September 1971 to April 1972. Marchetti refers to the National Reconnaissance Organization and correctly associates it as ". . . this is the group that's in charge of the satellites, the spies in the skies."

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(c) The third use of material referring to the National Reconnaissance Office appeared

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in the Christian Science Monitor, 23 April 1973 in an article titled: "New Broom at CIA" by Benjamin Welles. In this article Welles discusses activities of Mr. James Schlesinger as head of the CIA. With reference to the "Intelligence Community Staff" Mr. Welles says: "On Schlesinger's order the ICS will comprise about 60--half CIA and the rest representing agencies involved in military intelligence--DIA, the code cracking National Security Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, the State Department intelligence arm."

It is noted that Welles indicates that Mr. Schlesinger was the source of his information. In this connection Welles says: "In his first talks with newsmen, Mr. Schlesinger has promised to cut back on such costly--and dismally ineffective--CIA pseudo-secret activities as running 50,000 anti-Communists guerrillas in Laos.

While not directly pertinent to the subject of this paper, it is interesting to note that Welles says Mr. Schlesinger "forecasts a greater technological capability for the CIA." Welles then engages in a little speculative reporting. He says: ". . . presumably through new 'real time' spy satellites being developed that will transmit copious photographic and electronic data collected over the Soviet Union, China or other 'targets' instantaneously to U.S. earth stations for fast analysis. Currently most U.S. satellites spew forth data in packets which specially trained air crews recover in mid-air over the Pacific, then fly to Rochester for processing and Washington for analysis--a time consuming process."

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(d) Fourth mention of the NRO was made in the Chicago Tribune, 27 April 1973, which carried a rewrite of the 23 April article by Welles in the Christian Science Monitor.

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(e) The fifth mention of the NRO occurred in the Congressional Record of October 12, 1973 when the National Reconnaissance Office was mentioned along with CIA, DIA and NSA.

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(f) The sixth reference to the NRO occurred in the Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report which reported on the activities of the Special Senate Committee to Study Questions related to Secret and Confidential Government documents. This Committee's report was the item in the Congressional Record of 12 October 1973.

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(g) The seventh mention in the press of the NRO was the Laurence Stern article in the Sunday, December 9, 1973 Washington Post titled: "\$1.5 Billion Secret in the Sky. U.S. Spy Unit Surfaces by Accident."

(h) This was replayed in large measure in the Olympian Olympia, Washington on December 12, 1973. The article was titled "Its Initials are NRO . . . Very Hush-Hush." This then is the eighth article in the press which has come to our attention.

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Chief, Special Security Center

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