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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D C

THE NRO STAFF

26 January 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR COLONEL HOFMANN

Please conduct a Staff study of the matter outlined in my attached memorandum and provide a suggested approach for raising the matter to appropriate higher authorities. I would like to have your response by 10 February.

[REDACTED]

WILLIAM L. SHIELDS, JR.
Brigadier General, USAF
Director

Attachment
DNRO Staff Memo for
Record, dtd 26 Jan 78,
re Civil Applications

cc:

Dr. Cook

Mr [REDACTED]

Mr [REDACTED]

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

It appears to me that the civil application of NRO satellites has not received a degree of attention that is consistent with recent executive and legislative reviews of the propriety of intelligence operations. There have been a series of executive actions, culminating in an executive order signed within the week. The Congress has held extended hearings on intelligence matters and is deliberating the issuance of legislative charters for intelligence agencies. I see no evidence that civil applications of NRO satellites have been explicitly subsumed in these efforts.

The civil applications tasking is uncoupled as a matter of policy from the COMIREX tasking. Each civil agency is evidently responsible for attesting to the propriety of their collection requirements. Thus, there appears to be a potential for inappropriate use of NRO systems. It is not clear that the propriety of these civil applications collection activities is being reviewed by the Inspectors General of the Executive Departments, or by the Intelligence Oversight Board, or the Attorney General, or the Congress.

I believe that the Director of Central Intelligence, as the top U.S. intelligence official; the Secretary of Defense, as the executive agent for the NRO; and the DNRO, as the line authority who sends commands to the satellite, are potentially in a vulnerable position with respect to this issue.



WILLIAM L. SRIELDS, JR.
Brigadier General, USAF
Director

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