EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY
ADMINISTRATOR, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

FROM: JOHN H. MARBURGER, III
DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Landsat Data Continuity Strategy Adjustment

This memorandum is to inform you of the outcome of recent discussions among affected agencies and Executive Office of the President (EOP) offices regarding the Landsat program. This memorandum updates and revises the guidance provided in my memorandum of August 13, 2004. That memorandum directed agencies to incorporate Landsat-type sensors on the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS), and was based on preliminary analysis performed by an interagency study group. Please refer to that memorandum for additional background on the Landsat program leading up to this round of decision-making.

Detailed analysis leads to strategy adjustment

Consistent with the actions outlined in my August 13, 2004 memorandum, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other agencies, undertook a detailed analysis of the proposal to incorporate Landsat-type sensors on two selected NPOESS platforms. The results of that technical analysis indicated that the complexities of incorporating Landsat-type sensors on the NPOESS platforms significantly exceeded earlier assessments and made that option less

suitable to the goals of both programs. After careful consideration in interagency discussions, all parties agreed that adjustments to the current near-term strategy and development of a new long-term strategy are required in order to ensure the continuity of Landsat-type data.

Ensuring near-term data continuity

The objective of ensuring continuous availability of scientifically sound Landsat-type data can be realized in the near term by revising the Landsat data continuity mission strategy and establishing a plan for data continuity over the longer term. In particular, the Departments of Commerce, Defense, the Interior and NASA will take the following near-term actions:

- Proceed with the NPOESS program without incorporating a Landsat-type instrument;

- NASA will acquire a single Landsat data continuity mission in the form of a free-flyer spacecraft to collect the required land surface data and deliver its data to the Department of the Interior (DOI) / United States Geological Survey (USGS);

- DOI, through the USGS, will be responsible for the operations of the Landsat data continuity mission and for the collection, archiving, processing, and distribution of the land surface data to U.S. Government and other users; and

- The detailed roles and responsibilities of DOI and NASA for this near-term Landsat data continuity mission will be ratified by the two agencies and will be commensurate with the final acquisition approach and selection. The agencies will seek to implement an approach for this mission in a manner that does not preclude a long-term solution for continuity of Landsat-type data.

Ensuring long-term continuity

It remains the goal of the U.S. Government to transition the Landsat program from a series of independently planned missions to a sustained operational program funded and managed by a U.S. Government operational agency or agencies, international consortium, and/or commercial partnership. Concurrent with the actions cited above, the National Science and Technology Council, in coordination with NASA, DOI/USGS, and other agencies and EOP offices as appropriate, will lead an effort to develop a long-term plan to achieve technical, financial, and managerial stability for operational land imaging in accord with the goals and objectives of the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System.