



Office of the Deputy Director

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NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

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17 JAN 2012

7 March 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, NATIONAL IMAGERY AND MAPPING AGENCY

SUBJECT: HEXAGON and GAMBIT Declassification Initiative ~~(S//BYE)~~

Reference: Acting Director of Central Intelligence memo,  
21 Dec 1996, Imagery Declassification

~~(S//BYE)~~ In an effort to make available to the public as much imagery related information as possible consistent with the interests of national defense and foreign policy, I have initiated a plan to declassify the appropriate programmatic, operational, and technical aspects of both the HEXAGON (KH-9) and GAMBIT (KH-7 and KH-8) collection systems this year. This plan is consistent with the spirit contained in the Acting Director of Central Intelligence's (A/DCI) direction (reference). Both HEXAGON and GAMBIT, operating in tandem, made significant contributions to national security during the Cold War and a combined declassification endeavor would further highlight their critical collaborative value to U.S. policymakers.

~~(S//BYE)~~ I would like to highlight this declassification effort with a National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) ceremony (including the release of selected declassified imagery from both systems) in October 1997, preceding NRO Family Day, with displays and exhibits for Family Day. In addition, in 1998 the NRO would be willing to co-host, with the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, a scholarly conference focusing on the program information, examples of collected information, and the impact these

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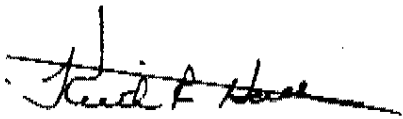
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systems had on national policy. These activities could also help commemorate the 50th anniversary of both the U.S. Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency, both of which played major roles in these satellite programs. I consider the availability of declassified imagery examples essential for the success of these initiatives and would like your views on the feasibility of declassifying selected HEXAGON and GAMBIT imagery in conjunction with my proposed declassification plan for the program data.

(U) An NRO review of this proposal has identified a number of issues related to declassification of each system and its imagery which may require continued classification of certain aspects of these programs. Thus, I am aware of the complexities involved. Authority for the approval of the declassification rests with the A/DCI. I will finalize my proposal upon receipt of your views.

(U) Realizing that this overall declassification effort will be difficult, time-consuming, and will require extensive Intelligence Community coordination and cooperation, I believe we should request A/DCI approval of the effort no later than the end of March.

(U) My action officer for imagery policy issues is Mr. [REDACTED]. He can be reached at [REDACTED] (open), [REDACTED] (secure).

  
Keith R. Hall

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