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NASA Review Completed.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: 40 Committee Matter:
Apollo 17 Earth Photography Contingency Plan

REFERENCE: Memorandum from James C. Fletcher to Henry A. Kissinger,
subject: Apollo 17 Earth Orbital Contingency Mission,
dated 17 November 1972

1. By the reference memorandum (attached) NASA seeks 40 Committee approval for a contingency photographic mission plan for Apollo 17 in the unlikely event that when launched on 6 December it achieves earth orbit but cannot continue to the moon. Previous contingency plans approved by the 40 Committee for Apollo 16 and earlier missions stipulated that photographic activity would emphasize US and Western Hemisphere coverage, that no Sino-Soviet coverage would be acquired, and that COMIREX would review the photography prior to any public release or dissemination. The current proposal would extend the coverage to include China, USSR, Central Australia, Spain, Ethiopia and Africa. For reasons stated below, we recommend that you authorize us to convey your non-concurrence in this proposal to change previous guidelines for the Apollo contingency plan. Dr. Proctor concurs with this recommendation.

2. We recommend against this proposal because we believe it would set a precedence for the Skylab operations next year during which relatively high resolution photographs - perhaps as good as 10 meters - will be taken. It is currently NASA's hope to follow a policy in Skylab of taking pictures on a worldwide basis without prior consent of other countries and making those photographs available for public consumption. The State Department gives every indication of going along with this plan in the interest of promoting an "open skies" environment. We are concerned that as the image quality of open systems improves, the risk will increase that some country will object to public release of photographs which it considers impinge on its sovereign interests. If this happens, it seems possible that the resulting controversy might jeopardize the viability of our reconnaissance satellites. Therefore we believe that before the 40 Committee approves Skylab operations it will want to set in motion a policy review to determine whether this risk is acceptable. We think you should oppose ad hoc actions, such as the proposed change in Apollo 17 planning, which might prejudice the outcome of such a review.

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3. In sum our recommendations are:

- a. You not approve the proposed change in Apollo 17 planning;
- b. You recommend a general policy review of photographic plans for the Skylab operation.




25X1

CARL E. DUCKETT
Deputy Director
for
Science and Technology

Approval of recommendations (a) and (b) in paragraph 3 above.

Richard Helms
Richard Helms
Director

28 NOV 1972
Date

Telephoned to
 *11/28/72*
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