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The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance  
Deputy Secretary of Defense  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Cy:

This will acknowledge with thanks your memorandum of 8 September concerning the National ELINT Plan, which I understand has been approved by you with certain modifications and which you are forwarding for my consideration and comment. As soon as the plan has been received and can be reviewed by my staff, I will forward my comments.

In the meantime, I am considering action to improve the competence of the USIB SIGINT Committee in the ELINT area so that this Committee can undertake enhanced responsibilities, including the review of requirements for ELINT collection for national purposes. In this connection, it is my impression that in the discussion which we had of peripheral reconnaissance flights you agreed with my suggestion that the monthly projection of these flights, prepared for consideration by the 303 Committee, should be submitted to USIB for an expression of USIB views concerning the validity of the intelligence requirements used to justify these flights. I believe that such a procedure would be very helpful in rationalizing the peripheral reconnaissance programs and suggest that it be put into effect as promptly as possible.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signature) JOHN A. MCCONE

John A. McCone  
Director

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON

8 SEP 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director, Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Approval and Implementation of the National ELINT Plan  
(NEP) (U)

The National ELINT Plan (NEP) was prepared by representatives of CIA, Joint Staff, DIA and NSA. I requested the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review the Plan and, in addition to their overall comments, to comment specifically on those aspects regarding peripheral air-borne collection programs.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended, and I have approved, certain necessary clarifications involving internal Department of Defense procedures. These changes were made subsequent to the participation of your representatives and are concentrated in the areas of DOD handling of requirements and peripheral reconnaissance flights. The JCS have additionally recommended, (a) that the USIB/SIGINT Committee be charged with responsibility for evaluating Second and Third Party ELINT rather than CIA and NSA as proposed in the NEP, (b) that the membership of the ELINT Advisory Group which the NEP would establish be broadened to include full-time representation from the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Marine Corps to insure coordination of programming and budgetary matters. Since the evaluation of Second and Third Party ELINT appears consistent with the general responsibilities which you have previously assigned the USIB/SIGINT Committee, I recommend that you issue an instruction to the USIB/SIGINT Committee specifically assigning it this responsibility.

I consider, however, that Department of Defense program review procedures for the Consolidated Cryptologic Program and the Consolidated Intelligence Program provide adequately for coordination with the Military Departments on their ELINT programs. Accordingly, I do not consider it necessary to provide for full time military department representation on the ELINT Advisory Group.

I have approved the NEP, as revised, for implementation within the Department and am forwarding it to you for your review. Annex (G), which described items and suggested recommendations in sensitive

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areas, I did not deem to be fully consistent with existing Agreements and Directives. Therefore, I have deleted those items from the action instructions provided to the JCS, DIA and NSA.

I believe that the National ELINT Plan can provide a mechanism through which the total National ELINT resources can be effectively coordinated in an integrated effort against the ELINT targets of continuing importance to our highest priority security needs.

I believe that the cooperative implementation of the NEP is a positive step forward and represents a proper solution to this complex problem. This implementation, with the active cooperation and participation of all organizations concerned with ELINT, should result in an ELINT program which will have the Military Departments and Commands, the Cryptologic Agencies, and Second and Third Party organizations working in harmony to provide a better product more economically.

I welcome your comments on the NEP and the implementing instructions I have forwarded to the JCS, DIA and NSA.

Further, I would like to have the advice and assistance of the CIA as necessary to cooperatively implement this Plan.

*Cyrus Vance*

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