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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
WASHINGTON

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MINUTES OF THE  
ARGO STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF 10 JUNE 1968

This document consists of 5 pages  
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MEMBERS

[Redacted]

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LIAISON REPRESENTATIVES

[Redacted]

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The first meeting of the newly constituted ARGO Steering Committee was held on 10 June 1968 in the Executive Office Building. By way of introduction, the chairman noted that this committee activity represents a continuance of the ARGO study program which was conducted during the past year by the civilian agencies to determine if photography from the existing reconnaissance satellites could be of use to them. In its report of March 1968, the study concluded that there were a number of likely possibilities which deserved further study. This indication of potential led [Redacted] to propose a continuation of the ARGO Steering Committee to oversee the further development of these possibilities and to act as an interface between the civilian agencies and the intelligence community in matters concerning these applications.

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All the invited agencies have now agreed to this proposal and have nominated the people in attendance as their representatives. The Director of Central Intelligence has endorsed this activity and has appointed [Redacted] the Chairman of the USIB Committee for Imagery, Requirements and Exploitation, as his liaison representative. [Redacted] continues to be the representative from the Defense Intelligence Agency. In recognition that the committee will need technical advice and assistance in connection with both the collection systems themselves and the photographic product of those systems, the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office has appointed [Redacted] as his representative and the Director of the National Photographic Intelligence Center has appointed [Redacted]

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The function of the ARGO Steering Committee, as agreed to by the participating agencies, is to (1) collect and consolidate the needs of each of the civilian agencies for data from the existing reconnaissance satellite systems; (2) see that these needs are made known to the intelligence community; (3) discuss with the intelligence community procedures for handling the data for these purposes.

The chairman pointed out that the committee activity assumes that there is a strong incentive within each participating agency to make use of existing intelligence resources and to establish a demonstrable need for data to support the uses that were identified in the ARGO report. The activities of the committee itself, therefore, will be directed toward:

- Stimulating the member agencies to conduct pilot demonstrations and studies to show feasibility and utility of those applications of interest to them.
- Arranging for data and advice from the intelligence community to support these studies.
- Reviewing the results of the studies and submitting justifications for data collection to COMIREX.
- Assisting member agencies in planning for the analysis and handling of needed data.
- Discussing security requirements for this data or its derivatives with the intelligence community.

Each of the members discussed briefly the status of their agencies' interest in the ARGO activities, summarizing the applications in which they had the most immediate current interest. As a result of these discussions, the committee agreed that the following specific applications were of most likely interest and feasibility:

- Foreign crop production assessment (Agriculture, AID).
- Foreign census estimates (AID).
- Regional maps and surveys (AID).
- Snow coverage measurement (Commerce).

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- Harbor mapping (Commerce).
- Geographic updating for topomaps (Interior).
- Sea ice surveillance (Commerce).
- Resources data base for Emergency Planning (OEP).

The members agreed that the priority job of the committee for the next six months to a year should be the development of papers on each of these subjects which would justify the need for data from the current satellite systems. Each of these papers should be backed up by pilot demonstrations or study results which would establish the technical feasibility of the application, the utility of the data to the user agency, and the procedures that would be used by the agency for analyzing and exploiting the data and for using the information derived therefrom.


Agriculture and AID discussed briefly their plans for conducting a pilot study on the assessment of foreign crop production and indicated that they would have a specific study plan ready in a few weeks for committee review. They agreed to present this plan at the next meeting of the committee.

The chairman requested the Department of the Interior to arrange a briefing for the committee at its next meeting on the status of the Interior program for using data from the current reconnaissance satellites for its domestic mapping program. Although it is not the function of this committee to deal with domestic cartographic uses, the experience that Interior has had in applying this kind of data to their map-making will give the committee a useful insight in what kind of problems to expect with regard to other uses.

Since the committee may be interested in recommending photography for mapping foreign countries or regions of interest to AID, the chairman requested the DIA to present a report to the committee at the next meeting concerning the status of foreign mapping and photographic coverage.

The meeting was adjourned with an agreement to meet again on 10 July at 10:00 A.M.

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Chairman, ARGO Steering Committee

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