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BYE 101-68/1Memorandum for Holders  
USIB-D-46.4/17  
2 July 1968  
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## UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

## MEMORANDUM FOR HOLDERS OF USIB-D-46.4/17

SUBJECT : Requirement for Photographic Reconnaissance in  
the Event U.S. Reconnaissance Satellites are Attacked

REFERENCE : USIB-D-46.4/17 (COMIREX-D-14.3/6), 10 June 1968,  
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1. On 28 June the United States Intelligence Board (USIB) concurred in the subject report by the COMIREX Committee attached to reference document.

2. As proposed by Admiral Taylor, the Chairman of USIB concurred in the COMIREX report subject to the understanding that NRO will notify USIB prior to the initiation of any actions proposed in response to the priorities expressed in the first two sentences of paragraph 6. Such notification should include a statement of the feasibility, probable effectiveness, alternatives to, and estimated costs of the proposed actions.

3. Accordingly, the COMIREX report subject to the above understanding has been referred by memorandum to the Director, National Reconnaissance Office, for information and guidance.

*James S. Lay, Jr.*  
JAMES S. LAY, JR.  
Executive Secretary

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(COMIREX-D-14. 3/6)  
10 June 1968  
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## UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Requirement for Photographic Reconnaissance in the Event U. S. Reconnaissance Satellites are Attacked

REFERENCES : a. SNIE 11-10-68, "Likelihood of Interference with U. S. Satellites", 23 May 1968  
b. USIB-S-10.10/1, 10 June 1968, Limited Distribution

1. The attached memorandum on the subject from the Chairman of the Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation (COMIREX) is circulated herewith for USIB consideration.

2. This report is submitted as part of the response to agreed DCI-D/NRO terms of reference for an overall reconnaissance satellite survivability study which seeks to determine the circumstances and likelihood of Soviet or third country interference with U. S. reconnaissance satellites (see reference a.) in order to provide a basis for determining the nature and level of resources which should be allocated to protect the U. S. Satellite Reconnaissance Program from such action. A similar report by the SIGINT Committee is also being circulated for concurrent Board consideration as reference b.

USIB ACTION REQUESTED

3. Board members are requested to advise the Secretariat by close of business 18 June of their concurrence in or other views on the attached memorandum and its transmittal as guidance to the D/NRO.

*James S. Lay, Jr.*  
JAMES S. LAY, JR.  
Executive Secretary

Attachment

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Attachment  
USIB-D-46.4/17  
(COMIREX-D-14.3/6)  
10 June 1968  
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MEMORANDUM FOR: United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Requirement for Photographic Reconnaissance  
in the Event U.S. Reconnaissance Satellites  
are Attacked

1. This requirement is submitted by COMIREX as its contribution to an overall satellite survivability study with the terms of reference calling for:

- a. a requirement for an acceptable level of reconnaissance satellite collection during a six-month contingency period in the next five years, in situations other than strategic nuclear war; and,
- b. a recommendation as to which satellite system(s) should be afforded priority for survivability.

In preparing the statement, COMIREX has taken into consideration the central theme and conclusions of SNIE 11-10-68 which evaluates the threat to reconnaissance satellites.

2. Despite the estimated improbability of hostile action, if satellite reconnaissance vehicles were interdicted, the intelligence community would be called upon to determine the reasons for the interference and to estimate the courses of action that the Soviet Union might follow. Even though the contingency of strategic nuclear war has been excluded specifically by the terms of reference, this possibility, nevertheless, would be of greatest concern and all available intelligence would be considered in an attempt to determine if war were imminent.

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3. If at the time of possible attack, the U.S. was already operating a warning/indications reconnaissance system capable of meeting the specifications outlined in USIB-D-46. 4/3 (COMIREX-D-13. 7/4)\*, a quick assessment of the hostile action could be obtained. This could be done even if a part of the warning system were destroyed by the initial attack, since the surviving elements would still be able to acquire a significant amount of near real-time sampling coverage of installations of greatest concern. Should the initial attack be of such magnitude as to obtain simultaneous or near-simultaneous destruction of all low-orbiting components of the system, this action in itself probably would be interpreted as evidence that general hostilities were imminent; thereby making the need for further non-wartime surveillance academic. At that time a full-scale wartime reconnaissance program using a mix of manned aerodynamic vehicles or a suborbital system to collect intelligence of immediate tactical concern over defended areas might be implemented. Because of slow response time (3 - 5 days), recoverable satellites would be of little or no value in determining if an attack on a satellite was an immediate prelude to general war.

4. In the event that reconnaissance satellites are attacked prior to the availability of a warning/indications reconnaissance system, we would need an interim capability to obtain quick coverage and quick receipt of information on a limited number of key indicator targets in order to determine the intention of the Soviet Union, and, short of general war, to learn the reasons for interference. This might be accomplished by use of

\*These specifications include: Daily sampling of selected reconnaissance objectives at about 2-1/2 foot resolution, real-time receipt of information and reporting on objectives (within about one hour) and at least daily access to the Sino-Soviet bloc area with the capability to photograph any portion of this area on demand.

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a specially programmed KH-4 or KH-9 vehicle making only one or two passes over the enemy area. We would expect to need this capability immediately following an attack and periodically thereafter for as long as sustained attacks occur.

5. Also pending the availability of a warning/indications system, but in second priority, will be the necessity to acquire search coverage to uncover new activities which might have important military or scientific significance. In terms of the intelligence base alone we would probably be able to do without search for several months. The need to initiate or resume search, however, will depend on the interpretation placed on the course of Soviet action as well as the quality and quantity of our intelligence base on the Sino-Soviet area at the outset of a sustained program to deny reconnaissance. In any event, the need will increase as hostile action continues.

6. As first priority, we believe it essential that the planning for a survivable system capable of meeting warning/indications specifications should incorporate means for minimizing an attack. Pending final decision on the ultimate availability of such a system, we recommend that priority be accorded to the survivability of our search systems to accomplish post-interference reconnaissance. Viewed in terms of maximum return from each satellite flown, we would not recommend a mission for high resolution photography of spot targets, which suggests that no effort be made to protect the KH-8 in this particular mode. In addition, pending the availability of a survivable warning/indications system or of a protected search system, we recommend that study be undertaken by NRO to determine the cost and feasibility of providing the capability to launch a short-duration warning-oriented KH-4 or KH-9 mission immediately following validation of attack on a satellite, and at various rates thereafter.

7. COMIREX recognizes that the subject of survivability is a most complex problem that could have a great impact in the future on the

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nature and cost of the U.S. satellite reconnaissance program. For this reason we will continue to study the subject to see if our requirements can be refined to assist in the accomplishment of future technical decisions. In the meantime it is requested that NRO keep COMIREX currently advised of its study of the interference problems.

*Hayden Channing*  
William A. Tidwell  
Chairman

Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

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