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By MMK NLDDE Date 7/13/11

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May 23, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE MORRIS H. STANS  
DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF THE BUDGET

With reference to our discussion yesterday concerning the operational capability of the reconnaissance satellite (W/S 117-L), I am attaching a copy of my memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, dated March 5, 1958, and the reply by Mr. Quarles, dated April 10, 1958.

There appears to be some uncertainty as to whether the present 117-L program as envisaged by the Defense Department partakes of the nature of an operational capability to such an extent that Presidential approval may be required under NSC Action No. 1046. Secretary McElroy seems to think that such approval is not now required. His forwarding letter to the President, dated May 7, 1958, which accompanied the ARPA Progress Report on the Military Reconnaissance Satellite Program for the quarter ending March 31, 1958 (a copy of which, I understand, has been received in the BoB) stated:

"In accordance with National Security Council Action No. 1046, the 'scope of operational capability' of Weapons System 117L will be promptly raised for your approval when such approval becomes necessary in carrying forward the program."

A Subcommittee of the Planning Board is engaged in drafting a proposed policy paper on Outer Space, a section of which will deal specifically with the reconnaissance satellite. The paper will be considered by the Planning Board next week and is scheduled to go to the Council in early July. When the Space Policy is before the Planning Board and the Council for discussion, it will be appropriate to raise the question as to whether any further Presidential decision is necessary or desirable with respect to the 117-L program.

ROBERT CUTLER  
Special Assistant  
to the President

Attachment -

cc *Haskins*

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