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8 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Special Projects

SUBJECT : Briefing to General Maxwell Taylor on
Photographic Satellite Support to
Middle East Crisis, 31 August 1967

1. As a result of a presentation given to the PFIAB, by the DCI in early July, General Taylor forwarded to the Agency a series of questions concerning intelligence collection capabilities in the context of the Middle East crisis. One of these questions had to do with utilization of photographic satellites to support decision making in the crisis situation.

2. In response to this query, I spent approximately 25 minutes discussing current satellite capabilities including the CORONA R -1 problem in the context of crisis situations. I also presented briefly the satellite coverage actually obtained in the Middle East from 23 May to the present time. I particularly emphasized the problems associated with using recovery film type systems in a crisis situation. I stated that the CORONA system did have a capability to stand by for 30 days at R -1 but this capability was not currently being utilized. I also said that there was no technical problem in the way of providing the R -1 on a continuous basis, but the cost of such an operation could be quite high. I further raised the question of the utilization in such situations of the CORONA ten-foot ground resolution. I also talked about the [REDACTED] system and the fact that it did not have a stand-by capability of any appreciable magnitude and that further, although the resolution of the system was considerably higher than CORONA, its coverage, particularly in situations such as the Middle East, was very limited.

3. General Taylor was clearly very interested in this problem area and very concerned about our ability to collect hard, timely

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intelligence in such situations as the Middle East crisis. He took the point of view that high resolution is not a terribly important factor when really many of the most interesting and important questions revolved around allocation of forces, troop movements and bomb damage assessment. I had mentioned that a CORONA launch costs approximately [REDACTED] but did not give him any estimates of the annual cost of providing a CORONA stand-by capability. [REDACTED] dollars did not seem to impress him as being a large number and he requested that we examine the question of the costs associated with providing a continuous stand-by vehicle. [REDACTED] staff, who was present, noted General Taylor's request and presumably will initiate action in this regard.

4. I mentioned briefly the work we were doing on the [REDACTED] Program and how this might be of possible interest to General Taylor. He asked a few questions, but did not request any further information in this regard.

5. I came away with a very clear impression that General Taylor felt strongly that policy making during the Middle East crisis was not adequately supported by intelligence data. Furthermore, he seemed to view this as an important problem and potentially worth the investment of substantial dollars.

[REDACTED]

Chief, Design and Analysis Division

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