



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

24

14 AUG 1958

AFMDC-3E

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES

SUBJECT: Security and Public Release of Information  
Regarding USAF Satellite Program

1. This memorandum concerns the subject of security and public release of information regarding the USAF satellite program. The specific project in question is WS 117L (Advanced Reconnaissance System)

2. The thoughts expressed below also relate to those set forth in our memorandum to you dated 12 November 1957, subject: "Security and Public Release of Information Regarding USAF Guided Missiles Program."

3. Recently this office proposed to send a TWX (see attached) to the Commander, BMD, ARDC, setting forth the authority to declassify the information that the WS 117L is a reconnaissance satellite, that ATLAS or THOR can be used for the first stage, and that its popular name is SENTRY. So far as is known, the latter was a name selected by your office and was never classified. The TWX specifically stated that the declassification did not constitute public release authority. This guidance was proposed in recognition of the fact that such information had already been officially expressed by top-ranking DOD personnel in Congressional Committee open hearings, and therefore security safeguarding of the information was not justified. Specific reference to the committee hearings is given in Tab A.

4. The Office of Security Review, OSD declined to coordinate, stating that it was contrary to guidance set forth by ARPA. Since the information we sought to declassify (except for the term "SENTRY") has been expressed in open hearings and has been published in public documents it cannot be denied that the Soviet Union has had access to this information. Moreover, since declassifying such information would save security costs and make handling within the Air Force easier, it cannot be denied that the Air Force is thereby put to needless security expense and administrative inconvenience by retaining classification, both within our field agencies and contractor facilities. Finally, it must

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The following references contain statements made in open Congressional Committee hearings relative to FS 1171 being a reconnaissance satellite and using ATLAS or THOR as boosters.

1. Pages 304, 305, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1959, Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 85th Congress, testimony of Dr. York, ARPA.

2. Pages 1634-5, Inquiry Into Satellite and Missile Programs, Hearing Before the Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, U. S. Senate, 85th Congress, testimony of General Shriever, USAF.

TAB A