

SEP 24 '98 10:19AM ATD

ER 98-574



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]
~~DECL. 1.6X1~~

September 15, 1998

Dear George,

The Department supports the ongoing Historical Imagery Declassification Review that the Intelligence Community (IC) has undertaken at your direction. INR has coordinated this issue broadly within the Department with a focus on overall USG policy on foreign access to space remote sensing and the management of foreign reaction to the broader availability of high quality satellite imagery.

We believe that all the KH-9 mapping camera film can be declassified immediately without risk. We also believe [redacted] the KH-7 film may be declassified except [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

This would offer several advantages. We would be able to confirm that no unanticipated extreme foreign reaction would cause the USG to restrict commercial imaging [redacted]

[redacted]

Mr. George C. Tenet
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C.

~~SECRET~~ [redacted]

CLASSIFIED BY: Edward G. Abington, INR A/S, Acting
REASON: 1.5 (c) (d)

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~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED]

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declassification of KH-9 photography over such areas. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Blanket declassification, as was done with the KH-1-6, is the easiest to defend because it does not presume that foreign governments should incur security risks that we are not prepared to incur ourselves. [REDACTED]

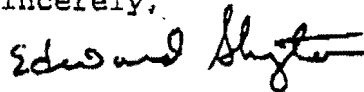
[REDACTED]

The Department believes that the advantages of blanket declassification should be carefully weighed in considerations given to withholding any KH-9 photography to avoid US security risks. Of course, if imagery is identified that truly presents a continuing threat to US national security, the Department will support withholding such imagery from declassification. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Blanket declassification, if national security issues are not, in fact, compromised by such action, would allow us to take a consistent position that this photography does not, on balance, pose a security threat that outweighs its benefits to civil applications and public research.

Sincerely,



Edward G. Abington, Acting
Assistant Secretary

~~SECRET~~ [REDACTED]