DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
(ACTING)
WASHINGTON, DC 20511

E/S 00408

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Bruce Carlson, USAF (Ret.)
                    Director, National Reconnaissance Office

SUBJECT: (S//REL) Declassification of GAMBIT and HEXAGON Program
                    Names

REFERENCE: (U) D/NRO Memorandum dated 28 April 2010

(S//REL) GAMBIT (KH-7 and KH-8 systems) and HEXAGON (KH-9, including the mapping camera system and dual panoramic cameras) were Cold War-era, film-return, satellite reconnaissance systems. GAMBIT operated between 1963 and 1984; HEXAGON operated between 1971 and 1984. The NRO developed these systems during the Cold War as follow-on systems to the CORONA, ARGON, and LANYARD satellite reconnaissance systems. Programmatic data and imagery from those three earlier systems were declassified in 1995.

(U) In response to your request, the program names GAMBIT and HEXAGON, as film-return camera imaging systems, and their association with the KH-7, KH-8 and KH-9 satellite imaging missions, are hereby declassified effective 27 July 2010. In addition, the mission numbers (M4301-M4354) associated with the KH-8 system designator are also declassified. All affected agencies and mission partners shall ensure these decisions are reflected in the appropriate program security classification guides.

(U) This decision applies only to the program names and mission numbers of these overhead reconnaissance camera imaging systems. Until formally reviewed for declassification, any other data or information about, or derived from these systems, will remain classified.

(S//REL) I also concur with a phased approach of using carefully planned increments for the declassification of details about the GAMBIT and HEXAGON programs, as described in your accompanying draft Policy Decision Risk Assessment. However, any programmatic declassification decisions should be directly linked to imagery declassification efforts mandated by Executive Order 12951 and tasked in the 26 May 2010 memorandum, wherein the DNI directed the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, with assistance from the National Reconnaissance Office, to re-establish the comprehensive program for the periodic review of all space-based national intelligence reconnaissance systems in order to determine whether to release imagery acquired by those systems, to the public. A phased approach to declassifying programmatic data and imagery associated with these systems should be done in a coordinated fashion that includes Intelligence Community, Departments of Defense and State, as well as other stakeholder input. To ensure consistency, the DNI will continue to make the final declassification decision, based upon these inputs and your recommendations.

Classified By: David C. Gompert
Derived From: NRO CG V6.0 21 May 2005
Declassify On: 20350727

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(U) The NRO has a long and proud heritage of developing and operating advanced systems for space reconnaissance. The conjunction of the NRO's 50th Anniversary and a phased and coordinated declassification effort will provide the NRO, and by extension, the Intelligence Community at large, a rare opportunity in providing the general public insight into some of our greatest engineering achievements in space.

(U) Should you have any questions regarding this decision, please feel free to contact John Hackett, ODNI Director, Information Management Office at ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

ODNI b2, b6

_____   _____7/27/10_____
David C. Gompert   Date

Attachments:
1. (U) NRO Memorandum dated 28 April 2010 (classified TS//SI/TK//NF)
2. (U) NRO Policy Decision/Risk Assessment Guide (classified TS//SI/TK//RSEN/NF)

SECRET//REL TO USA, FVEY when separated from the attachments.

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