
Presidential Documents

Title 3—**Executive Order 12951 of February 22, 1995****The President****Release of Imagery Acquired by Space-Based National Intelligence Reconnaissance Systems**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and in order to release certain scientifically or environmentally useful imagery acquired by space-based national intelligence reconnaissance systems, consistent with the national security, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Public Release of Historical Intelligence Imagery.* Imagery acquired by the space-based national intelligence reconnaissance systems known as the Corona, Argon, and Lanyard missions shall, within 18 months of the date of this order, be declassified and transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration with a copy sent to the United States Geological Survey of the Department of the Interior consistent with procedures approved by the Director of Central Intelligence and the Archivist of the United States. Upon transfer, such imagery shall be deemed declassified and shall be made available to the public.

Sec. 2. *Review for Future Public Release of Intelligence Imagery.* (a) All information that meets the criteria in section 2(b) of this order shall be kept secret in the interests of national defense and foreign policy until deemed otherwise by the Director of Central Intelligence. In consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence shall establish a comprehensive program for the periodic review of imagery from systems other than the Corona, Argon, and Lanyard missions, with the objective of making available to the public as much imagery as possible consistent with the interests of national defense and foreign policy. For imagery from obsolete broad-area film-return systems other than Corona, Argon, and Lanyard missions, this review shall be completed within 5 years of the date of this order. Review of imagery from any other system that the Director of Central Intelligence deems to be obsolete shall be accomplished according to a timetable established by the Director of Central Intelligence. The Director of Central Intelligence shall report annually to the President on the implementation of this order.

(b) The criteria referred to in section 2(a) of this order consist of the following: imagery acquired by a space-based national intelligence reconnaissance system other than the Corona, Argon, and Lanyard missions.

Sec. 3. *General Provisions.* (a) This order prescribes a comprehensive and exclusive system for the public release of imagery acquired by space-based national intelligence reconnaissance systems. This order is the exclusive Executive order governing the public release of imagery for purposes of section 552(b)(1) of the Freedom of Information Act.

(b) Nothing contained in this order shall create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by any party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

Sec. 4. Definition. As used herein, “imagery” means the product acquired by space-based national intelligence reconnaissance systems that provides a likeness or representation of any natural or man-made feature or related objective or activities and satellite positional data acquired at the same time the likeness or representation was acquired.



THE WHITE HOUSE,
February 22, 1995.

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