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NSC Announces U.S. Commercial Remote Sensing Space Policy

On Tuesday, May 13, the White House issued the U.S. commercial remote sensing space policy (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030513-8.html>) establishing policy, guidelines and implementation actions for U.S. commercial remote sensing space capabilities. This document supersedes Presidential Decision Directive/National Security Council (NSC) NSC-23, U.S. Policy on Foreign Access to Remote Sensing Space Capabilities, dated March 9, 1994.

On June 28, 2002, President Bush directed the NSC, with support of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), to review national space policies. The effort was coordinated under the auspices of the Space Policy Coordinating Committee, chaired by the NSC Senior Director for Defense Policy and Arms Control. Other Federal agencies, including NIMA, participated with recommendations regarding revision, consolidation and/or elimination of existing national space policy statement related to space activities.

The new policy provides guidance for: the licensing and operation of U.S. commercial remote sensing space systems; U.S. Government use of commercial remote sensing space capabilities; foreign access to and exports of these capabilities; and government-to-government intelligence, defense, and foreign policy relationships involving commercial remote sensing space capabilities. Its goal is to advance and protect our national security and foreign policy interests by maintaining the nation's leadership in remote sensing space activities, and by sustaining and enhancing U.S. remote sensing industry. Doing so will also foster economic growth, contributing to environmental stewardship, and enabling science and technology excellence.

Under the new policy, NIMA continues to exercise key responsibilities for commercial remote sensing from space as it is applied to national security and foreign policy. The Departments of Interior and Commerce, and the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) are jointly responsible for identifying civil remote sensing needs. All Federal agencies will allocate the resources required to implement these objectives. NIMA will assist the civil agencies in any way it can to implement this policy and develop contract mechanisms. NIMA has long been on record as supporting a strong, robust and viable commercial imagery industry.

The policy assigns specific implementation actions for the Secretaries of Defense, State, Commerce and the Director of Central Intelligence. NIMA will have a leadership position in preparation and community coordination of at least three of the implementation plans and will be a supporter of the remaining five. It is within these implementation plans where the details of the policy will be developed and defined. NIMA will remain dedicated to this effort to develop and execute the implementation plans.

Further information about the U.S. commercial remote sensing policy is available on the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Web Site at <http://www.ostp.gov/html/new.html>.

NIMA is a national intelligence and combat support agency whose mission is to provide timely, relevant and accurate Geospatial Intelligence in support of our national security. Geospatial Intelligence is the exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information to describe, assess and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities on the Earth.