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The Center for the Study of National Reconnaissance (CSNR) is the NRO Office of Policy's research, policy analysis, and history component. CSNR products and activities help define and explain the discipline, practice, and history of national reconnaissance. CSNR functions are intended to help to provide NRO leadership with a historical context and conceptual focus for its policy and programmatic decisions. CSNR also responds to today's reality of an increasingly open NRO, and helps inform and educate the national reconnaissance community. By accomplishing its mission, CSNR supports the NRO's strategic goals to execute space reconnaissance acquisition and operations, transform sources and methods, and partner in delivering vital intelligence.

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By Dennis D. Fitzgerald

The Deputy Director of the NRO addresses the changing nature of risk and risk management in national reconnaissance. He compares and contrasts four periods in terms of the willingness of NRO program managers to take risks coupled with the tolerance for failure by oversight authorities. Mr. Fitzgerald also provides a set of rules for building and managing realistic national reconnaissance programs.

19 National Reconnaissance Leadership for the 21st  
Century: Lessons from the NRO's Heritage

By Patrick D. Widlake

CSNR Senior Policy Analyst Patrick Widlake posits that the principles guiding the extraordinary achievements from the NRO's formative years remain valid to managers even 45 years later. He first gives the historical context and then recounts some examples of pioneering accomplishments, and the overriding lessons that leadership can derive. He concludes that despite changes wrought by increased oversight, intelligence reform, and priority changes, the most important lessons from the pioneering era should never be forgotten.

### 35 One Officer's Perspective: The Decline of the National Reconnaissance Office

By Robert Kohler

Mr. Kohler wrote this article, originally published in *Studies In Intelligence* in 2002, with the objective of fostering a dialogue on the future relationship between the CIA and the NRO. In his view, the CIA's once-strong role in national reconnaissance has devolved into providing the NRO with bodies and not much more, which he held is not in the best interests of either entity or the DCIA.

### 45 Commentary on "The Decline of the National Reconnaissance Office"—The NRO Leadership Replies

By Dennis D. Fitzgerald

In this commentary, also originally published in *Studies In Intelligence*, Mr. Fitzgerald takes issue with Kohler's assertion that the NRO has become a mediocre organization, with an uncertain future. He notes that Kohler provided an interesting historical perspective, but Fitzgerald points out that NRO's current civilian and military personnel mix constitute the smartest engineering workforce that has ever been assigned to the organization. Fitzgerald also maintains that Kohler's suggested program reorganization would not revitalize design creativity, but that the current organizational structure has the NRO functioning as it should. He concludes that the NRO's best days lie ahead.

### 51 Recapturing What Made the NRO Great: Updated Observations on "The Decline of the NRO"

By Robert Kohler

In a critique updating his earlier observations, Mr. Kohler suggests that the NRO needs to regain end-to-end responsibility and fund programs realistically. He also recommends that the DNRO should be a full-time position, not a "dual-hat" title along with Undersecretary of the Air Force, a policy recently adopted by the reconnaissance community.

### 59 Commentary on: Kohler's "Recapturing What Made the NRO Great: Updated Observations on "The Decline of the NRO"

By Dennis D. Fitzgerald

As with Mr. Kohler's earlier article, Mr. Fitzgerald responds from a leadership perspective. While conceding many of Kohler's points, Fitzgerald puts the funding criticisms in proper context, concluding that what the NRO really lacks following the forward funding crisis is the flexibility to manage its programs effectively.