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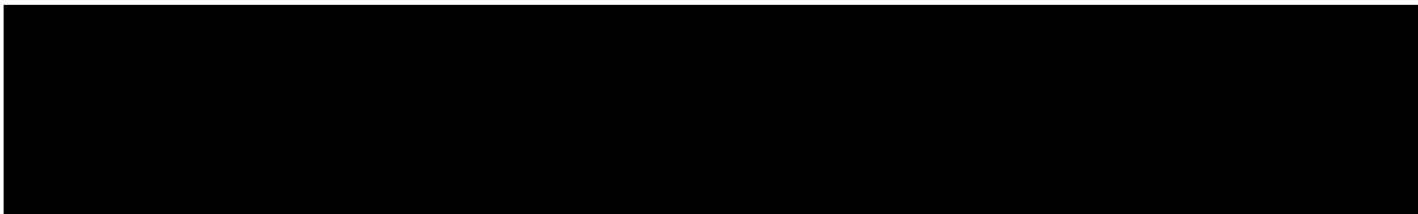
3 May 1957

AQUATONE/OILSTONE PROJECT

1. Status:

a. Weather conditions are generally favorable for aerial reconnaissance [redacted] and most of Siberia from April through October and in the Far East are moderately good in summer and at their best during the autumn.

25X6
25X1X4



d. A similar military capability is currently being developed by the Air Force which is equipping a SAC squadron with Air Force procured U-2 aircraft. This unit will be operationally ready and available for deployment by 1 August 1957.

e. It now appears that the U-2 will be relatively safe from interception at least through the present reconnaissance season and possibly, under certain circumstances, considerably longer. Nevertheless, both its margin of advantage and the security surrounding this operation are subject to continuous erosion so the AQUATONE capability must be regarded as a wasting asset.

2. Plans for the Current Season: Additional hard intelligence obtainable only through aerial reconnaissance is urgently required, especially on developments and installations having to do with Soviet guided missiles, nuclear weapons, and intercontinental bombers. To cover thirty-five such targets which have been selected by the Intelligence Community as having the highest priority should require some twelve to fifteen successful missions, taking account of normal weather patterns. If permission is granted to conduct these overflights it is proposed that they be undertaken only as highly favorable weather materializes so as to obtain maximum coverage with a minimum number of sorties. This would imply a rate of operation of only one to three missions per week.

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