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HANDLE VIA [redacted]  
CONTROL SYSTEM

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[redacted] 2524-66  
14 May 1966  
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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SUBJECT: Internal Mission Approval for [redacted] Mission C136C,  
15 May 1966

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1. At 1100 hours, 14 May, I picked up the Black Book for Mission C136C in the OSA Control Center, together with the mission folder on Mission C126C, flown last night, and proceeded to the Director's Office where I met with [redacted] Director of Reconnaissance, CIA, to obtain his signature for C136C.

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2. I went over in some detail with [redacted] the events of Mission C126C, and especially the information then in hand regarding the SA-2 activity in the Kunming area, where the aircraft was reportedly attacked by several missiles from an area where the NPIC SAM search had been performed with negative results. I showed him [redacted] 7287 and [redacted] 7295 which contained details on [redacted] performance, pilot's observations and evasive maneuvers. We both informally concluded that in all probability the SA-2s came from Chicom mobile SAM installation(s). I explained to [redacted] that C136C was designed to complement the coverage of C126C, and that if it was successfully flown, that should wrap up Southwest China highest priority targets for at least another month or so. He then signed for the mission.

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3. In company with [redacted] we then called on Mr. Richard Helms, DDCI, in his office, to obtain his sign off for the Director. [redacted] and I once again went over the details of C126C, stressing the SAM mobility idea. I said that if the Chicoms did fire two or three missiles at Kunming and missed, unless they were different than we in the same circumstance, there might well be a post-mortem examination of what went wrong, which might make it unlikely that they would immediately roll that capability down the road to Meng Tzu to be ready to try it again tonight. We did admit, however, that there was no way of telling if they

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had a different SAM battery at Meng Tzu than the one at Kunming. As for a coordinated attack at Meng Tzu between SA-2s and MIG-21s, I said that I discounted this possibility, since the Chicoms might nail one of their own birds. Yet it would be attractive to be able to distract the U-2 pilot with one or the other capability, and then when he was turning and losing altitude, hit him with the other.

4. Mr. Helms said that in view of the recent dust-up over the MIG shutdown in China by U. S. aircraft and the political noise level arising therefrom, he felt that he should not contribute a possible added static element (arising from a shutdown) to the pot without first running it by Secretary McNamara. (It appears that the Chicom MIG was in fact shot down over China, despite the preliminary view to the contrary held by the Air Force, and C136C flies right over the spot where the reported shutdown took place).

5. Mr. Helms then (1150 hours) placed a call to the Secretary of Defense to discuss the matter. Mr. McNamara was not available, so Mr. Helms spoke with Secretary Vance, repeating the substance of paragraph four above, mentioning the success of Mission C126C (but not discussing the SA-2 input) and the fact that C136C had a mathematical chance of adding to the noise level if anything went sour. Mr. Vance said that he was lunching with Secretary McNamara in a few minutes, and together they would discuss the matter and report back. Mr. Helms explained that he was leaving the office, and asked Mr. Vance to call [redacted] in the DCI's office when they had a position to report.

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6. I then joined [redacted] of COMOR in [redacted] office to await word from Secretary Vance. Promptly at 1230 hours, Mr. Vance called [redacted] and said that he and Secretary McNamara had gone over the problem, and it was their joint view that the [redacted] mission should proceed. [redacted] then signed the Black Book for both the DDCI and the DCI as he had been given approval to do by Mr. Helms on receipt of favorable word from the Pentagon. I told [redacted] that I would make a memorandum for the record of the whole transaction, which this document represents.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.  
Acting Director of Special Activities

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DD/SA/JA Cunningham/mcm(14 May 66)

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