WORKING PAPER

UTILIZATION OF THE CIA U-2R RECONNAISSANCE FLEET

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1966, after a joint SAC/CIA consideration of the possible purchase of 25 aircraft, CIA contracted for only twelve U-2R vehicles when SAC indicated they had no need. Before delivery however, high level discussions resulted in the transfer of six of these vehicles to SAC. Since that time the Agency has done all R&D necessary to maintain a reliable reconnaissance system and has effected all procurement for both fleets. CIA has maintained an effective [redacted] and has 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] SAC has not had the same requirements for sophisticated [redacted] 25X1 systems, principally because the environment in which they have been operating is not as hostile. Both organizations have maintained good photo systems.

The CIA maintains a fleet of six U-2R aircraft which are available for [redacted] photographic [redacted] missions. At the present time, the 25X1 principal deployed unit, with two U-2R aircraft, is on [redacted] From 25X1

25X1 this base, [redacted] pilots conduct missions along the coast and at times over mainland Communist China. With the assistance of

the U.S. Navy carrier forces and the [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] an additional capability for worldwide deployment has been demonstrated.

The Strategic Air Command also maintains an additional fleet of six U-2R aircraft of which two U-2Rs are deployed against the national requirement in Southeast Asia and the island of Cuba.

II. THE PROBLEM

It is recognized that satellites now collect a high proportion of photography for strategic intelligence purposes [redacted] 25X1

To supplement this capability, military and Agency aircraft are also available for photography [redacted]. It is therefore 25X1 necessary to review the total needs for intelligence information as well as the efficiencies of management to determine if all of these capabilities

and properly utilized to assess the utilization of
are needed. The issue of this ~~consideration~~ is the U-2R fleet now
(paper)
operated by CIA in light of true total need.

III. CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Agency U-2 Program provides the U.S. a flexible overhead reconnaissance system with unique capabilities for high resolution 25X1 [redacted] photography, [redacted] 25X1 The system can react rapidly to world-wide crisis situations cheaply, effectively, and at little political risk to the U.S. Government, especially in cases wherein third country bases [redacted] are 25X1 utilized.

The Agency has developed a specialized organization and methodology for effectively carrying out 25X1 [redacted] U-2 operations [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted]

[redacted] 25X1

This U-2 capability can be utilized on short notice with a reaction time of approximately fifty hours anywhere in the world. The current improved version of the U-2 has an average survivability better than 92.5% over a single SAM site, even if it flies directly overhead, and a survivability of about 99.6% if attacked by MIG-21's. The actual mission survivability can be made even higher by programming the flight path to avoid SAM installations. Direct costs are approximately [redacted] per 25X1 operational mission.

This program provides the U.S. Government with a low cost option for meeting future crisis situations in areas other than the more heavily defended areas of the Soviet Union. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted]

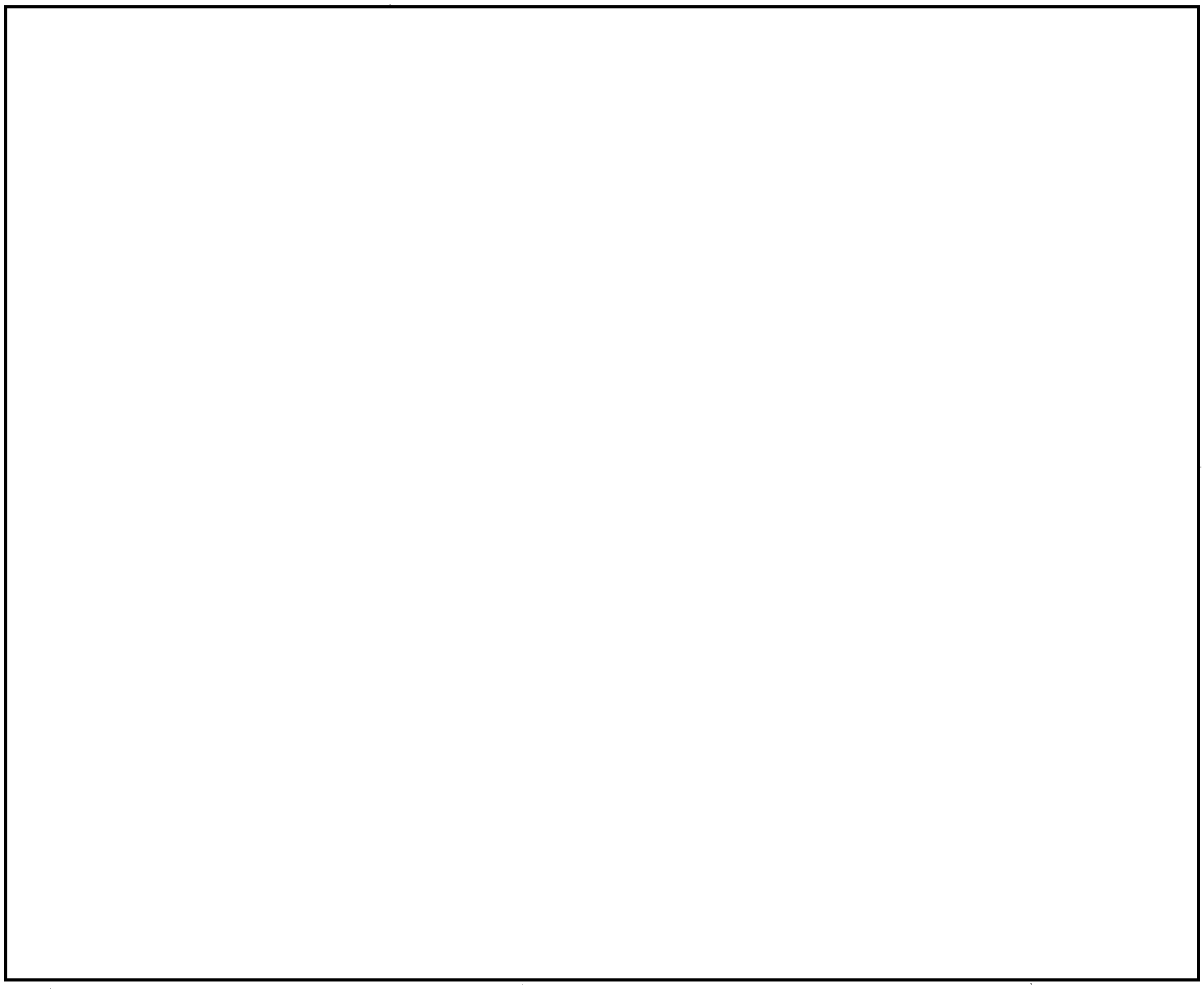
IV. CAPABILITIES

Agency U-2Rs have a mission altitude capability of [redacted] 25X1

25X1 and a maximum range of [redacted] miles at a speed of [redacted] They can 25X1 operate from relatively small fields or from carriers and deploy anywhere in the world to be over the target about 50 hours after an alert. The standard camera configuration provides for a swath width of 63 nautical miles, with 2300 n.m. of coverage in the flight direction.

Other configurations provide capabilities which vary from horizon-to-horizon coverage to pin point targeting having a [ ] resolution. 25X1

25X1



The U-2 can respond to crisis situations anywhere in the world within 50 hours. It can operate from friendly foreign bases, which provide plausible denial, or from carrier decks to cover highly critical

military targets or politically critical revolutions, migrations or suppressive activities of governments. It operates cheaply, on a timely basis, and can take advantage of weather breaks. [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted]

over China and all other nations, particularly in the procuring of

25X1 high value, [redacted]

in areas not having the capability of the Soviet Union, provide unique, high value technical intelligence which enable us to define both capabilities and operating techniques.

SAC U-2R's have the same general capabilities as above but because recent missions have not required operation in a hostile

25X1 environment, [redacted]

25X1 [redacted]

has not been an important target and therefore these systems have not been maintained at the state-of-the-art. All operate from established U.S. military bases.

Of the next generation reconnaissance aircraft the OXCART is in storage and the SR-71 is active in the Air Force. Both have photo

25X1 [redacted] capabilities. The SR-71 is now flying missions in the Far East. There is also some Air Force speculation that they will also

be ~~soon~~ flying in the Mid-East, as soon as additional funds are made available.

Both the TAGBOARD and 147 H/T drones are also available for photo missions. The 147 H/T having a resolution of 2 to 5 feet has been used mostly for tactical reconnaissance. The TAGBOARD specifications indicate that resolutions of two feet can be expected but no operational film has been received as the only launch to date was lost.

V. UTILIZATION

The CIA fleet consists of four planes at Edwards Air Force Base (Detachment G) and two at the Far East deployment base [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] All aircraft are maintained in an "operationally ready" posture. Both bases have a capability for worldwide deployment on a 24-hour notice and, depending on the deployment base distance, could be airborne on an operational mission in about ~~45 to 55~~ 50 hours after notification.

The CIA/OSA maintains [redacted] five 25X1

American pilots operationally ready for overflight of any place on the globe. There are informal agreements with the [redacted] for use of their 25X1

island bases for staging, and the [redacted] U-2 Agreement 25X1

provides for coordination and cooperation on South China missions.

25X1 There are sufficient [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] Sufficient camera equipment

25X1 [redacted] are maintained at all U-2 bases to satisfy those requirements levied by the Intelligence Community.

The CIA mission currently requires the maintenance of a system that will permit Mainland China peripheral or penetration missions out of

25X1 [redacted] and a worldwide deployment capability at [redacted] 25X1

and at Edwards AFB. Within 50 hours of a deployment alert, Agency aircraft can be over any target in the world with the exception of the more highly defended areas of the Soviet Union. It is the only covert manned aircraft in the NRO inventory.

SAC maintains four aircraft at Davis-Monthon AFB for training and support, one at McCoy AFB for Cuban coverage and one at Ben Hoa, Vietnam, for use over Laos and Cambodia. Current considerations would pull the McCoy vehicle back to home base and make periodic deployments to McCoy from there. The NRO report on this subject, dated 7 November, also speculates that "continued U.S. withdrawal from South Vietnam may cause SAC's U-2R's at Ben Hoa to be withdrawn.

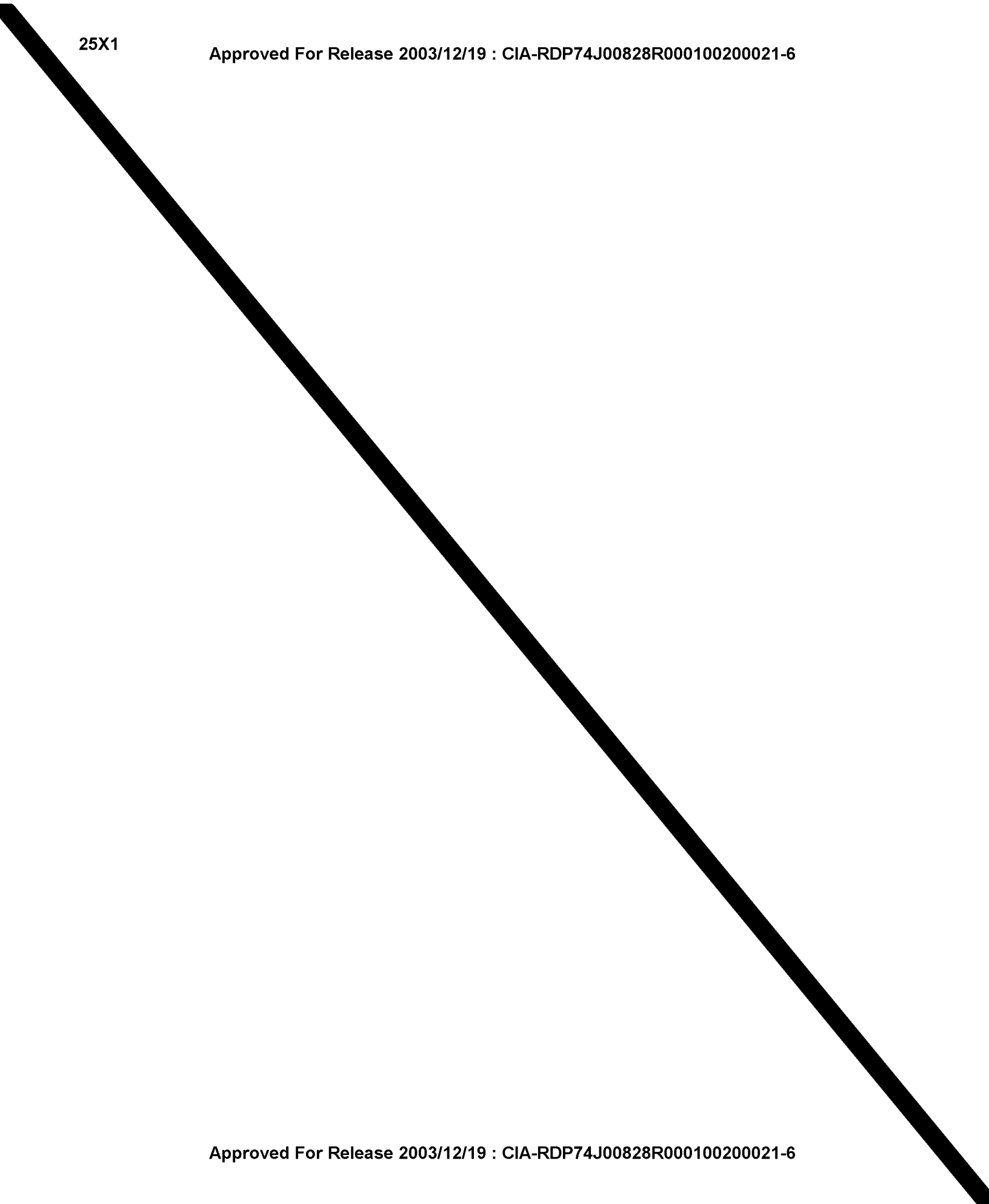
VI. THE NEED

For Utilization:

It is obvious that present utilization does not take advantage of all of the unique operating capabilities of the Agency U-2Rs. Although the situations in which they would be used vary to a considerable extent, each one exhibits a critical collection need which cannot be fulfilled by any other system if covertness, non-attribution and responsiveness are considerations.

Probably the most usual need would be to provide photographic coverage of areas unavailable to satellites because of nearly continuous cloud cover. Other vehicles, or U-2s operated by SAC, could also cover this requirement

25X1



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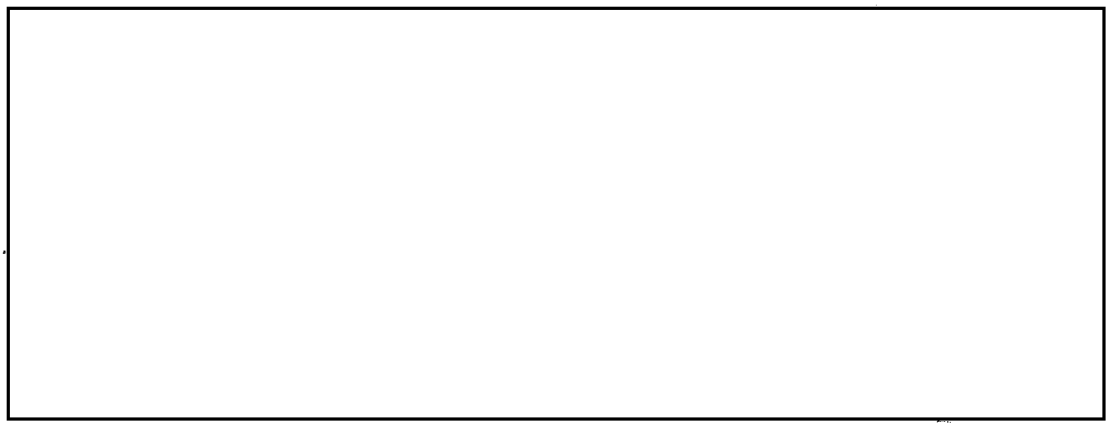
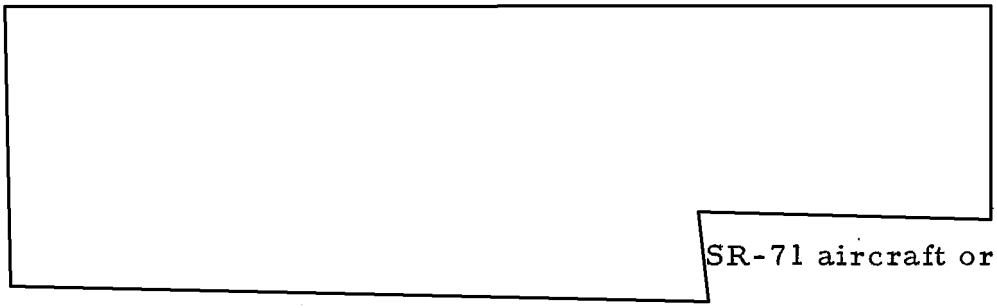


25X1

Typical missions which would require Agency U-2 activity would include surveillance of Mid-East war fronts, particularly if apparent military activity is not commensurate with known capabilities. This might indicate greater Soviet covert involvement.

ILLEGIB



25X1

SR-71 aircraft or drones also can be used but confusion which could result from flying military aircraft or missile-like drones could bring serious repercussions. The utilization of military pilots in U-2s would also be possible but would offer no advantages in spite of the obvious disadvantages. Civilians in SAC planes would fall into the same category although the

disadvantages would be less. SAC could also arrange

25X1 [redacted] agreements with foreign countries [redacted] 25X1

should be better stated or eliminated

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Certainly the experience could be gained but the process would be long and costly, both in terms of money and problems arising from inexperience.

For Responsiveness:

25X1 Assuming a [redacted] capability is desired, what are the virtues of Agency management? Initially, it would seem that the long SAC experience in flying and maintaining aircraft would be a considerable advantage. However, the Agency has had even more experience in the operation of this

particular vehicle and in addition has been required to operate it in environments that were much more hostile. This has forced research and development, both in collection devices because they were unique in the area, [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted]. Because of this thin line between aircraft loss and survival, the Agency has honed the whole system and operation to a fine edge. The consistant display of this same professionalism in deployments is also a factor in not only providing immediate coverage but also

25X1 [redacted]

VII. THE OPTIONS

Although the immediate issue is to make a determination on the future of the CIA U-2 fleet, the problem must be considered in the context of other reconnaissance capabilities such as the SAC U-2 fleet, the SR-71, and the drones. All are certainly important vehicles for military reconnaissance but the high costs of deployment of the SR-71 and the continuous high costs of accruing and deploying expendable drones essentially focus on the two U-2 fleets. 147 H/T Drones are recoverable

25X1 but poor resolution [redacted] removes them from consideration. The options then seem to desolve into (1) a status quo,

(4) elements within U2 program (eg, SAC)

(2) consolidation under SAC, or (3) consolidation under the Agency. If all are to be considered as possible options, however, it must be recognized that no pre-conceptions must dominate. Specifically, although seldom advanced as an argument, there is a general feeling that the mission of the Air Force is to fly aircraft and thus the Agency has little claim. Little recognition is given to the fact that the mission of the Air Force deals with responsibilities, not vehicles, and that specialized aircraft of all kinds are ~~formed~~ und in the Army, Navy, Coast Guard and Marine Corps. The mission of CIA to collect strategic intelligence by covert measures is also one of these specialized requirements.

Option I - The Status Quo:

The original "buy" of twelve U-2R aircraft by the DNRO for Agency requirements was predicated on an Air Force statement that no requirement existed in that organization for the "R" model. It was as obvious then as it is now that there are not sufficient requirements to justify two management systems for the requirement that existed. Virtues of this option are difficult to identify. Other facts pertain almost entirely to economics, and the fact that the total military expenditure

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required to support these aircraft are likewise extremely difficult to ascertain. The most significant factor beaming on the separation of management of the two fleets is that in reality only the operational activity is separated. Even now all research and development, as well as procurement for all systems, is done by the Agency. Likewise, Air Force maintains the warehouses and supply systems.

While the above would seem to indicate there is little virtue in separate organizations and that some of the assumed benefits of consolidation are already being achieved, the 7 November report of the DNRO indicates that separation is not advisable at this time. This report concludes that, "Combining the two fleets has been examined from time to time and the conclusions have been, and still are, that it is not economical or palatable because of construction costs, security problems, personnel transfers, political considerations, mission assignments, etc. Certainly the consideration was being thought of in terms of consolidation in SAC, as none of these considerations pertain to the Agency.

*Makes any judgment on the virtues of military operation impossible. CIA expenditures are entirely attributable and while they may be entirely comparable to Air Force time costs, the fact that they are visible make them more vulnerable.

Option II - Consolidation Under SAC:

Consolidation under SAC is attractive to budgeteers only because a large block of identifiable dollars can be eliminated and a facade of the function continued with dollars that are more difficult to identify. While a dollar comparison is theoretically possible, the many variables related to grade and rank, time in service of men assigned to the project, training costs, indirect costs of base facilities, etc. make such a determination unrealistic.

Although the above is only an apparent virtue, there are few others to recommend this option. SAC aircraft do not have either the [redacted] 25X1 to fulfill all requirements. Neither do they have trained maintenance men to maintain the Agency aircraft or the research and development base to continue improvement. Contracting reaction time is measured in years instead of months for design and procurement of new systems.

Particularly important is the lack of experience in 25X1 mounting [redacted] operations. The aircraft would always be attributed to SAC and be manned by military pilots. None of

[redacted] 25X1

Option III - Consolidation Under CIA:

The primary requirement for U-2R aircraft is to provide this country with a [redacted] aerial surveillance capability which is instantly responsive, can survive in all environments except the more highly defended areas of the Soviet Union, [redacted] 25X1 25X1

No other vehicle in the nations current inventory can fulfill these requirements and this has been the specific utilization of the U-2R by CIA since their procurement.

Savings resulting from consolidation in the Agency would be significant. As Cuban reconnaissance would stage directly out of Edwards and Laos-Cambodia missions out of [redacted] 25X1 [redacted] very little additional cost would be involved. With 25X1

such a small additional requirement all planes would not be maintained in operational readiness but would be in flyable storage at either Edwards [redacted] in hangar space now available. There would be a slightly higher utilization of pilots at no extra cost. 25X1

As both R&D and procurement for both fleets is currently an Agency function, there would be absolutely no charge by a consolidation under the Agency. The only function, other than operational control, not now exercised by the Agency, is warehousing and supply; although even transport and distribution is now an Agency activity.

WORKING DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR 303 COMMITTEE

SUBJECT:

1. As a result of concerns of the EXCOM and pressures from the BOB I have become concerned about the needs for a U-2R capability, whether it is in the Agency, SAC, or both. To this end I have had a review of the subject made and I am forwarding a copy for your consideration.

2. After a review of the paper I find that while the cost and support virtues of consolidation in the Agency are very appealing, the most important consideration is the retention of a [redacted] reconnaissance capability which can rapidly deploy to any place in the world. I feel that utilization of foreign bases [redacted] as well as the launch and recovery from aircraft carriers on any of the world's seas, gives us an important non-attributable capability. 25X1 25X1

It is my opinion that the availability of this flexible, quick reaction capability for covert reaction to world-wide crises more than justifies the cost of retentinn. I recognize that broad U.S. policy considerations must govern U-2 operations and decisions, especially as far as over-flights of China are concerned. And it is true that for the past few

years we have been reluctant to allow overflights even with [redacted] 25X1 manned aircraft. However, I think it is important to note that in times of crisis our attitude in this regard can change rapidly. It 25X1 is for such contingencies that a [redacted] capability like the U-2 would in my opinion become very important to the President. If we terminate this program now, this option will be lost.