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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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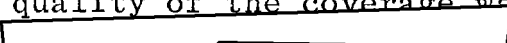


15 JUN 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE 303 COMMITTEE

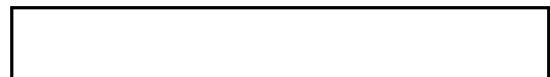
SUBJECT: OXCART Deployment

REFERENCE: DCI Memorandum to the 303 Committee
dated 22 March 1966

1. My proposal that CIA deploy the OXCART system to Okinawa to acquire urgently needed photographic coverage of South China and North Vietnam was made to this Committee on 28 March 1966 and was discussed again on 11 May. It was decided that further action by the Committee should await the completion of certain tasks, namely: (a) an analysis of the quantitative capability of various photographic collection assets, (b) an analysis of the quality of the coverage which these assets might obtain, (c)  and (d) the formulation of the proposed U.S. posture in the event of various contingencies arising from the OXCART deployment. These tasks have now all been completed.

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2. I believe there is substantial agreement that there is a continuing urgent need for high resolution photographic coverage of selected targets in South China and North Vietnam to provide warning of possible Chinese involvement in the Vietnam war. It has been clearly demonstrated that satellite photography, by itself, cannot meet this need. There is also agreement on the fact that the OXCART vehicle can add significantly to the photographic collection capability and that its contribution will increase steadily as the weather improves later this summer.



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3. In addition, there is agreement between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and CIA in light of experience gained during the past three months that the [REDACTED] will not meet the need for coverage of South China and that we should now turn to the OXCART for primary coverage with the [REDACTED] supplementing as feasible in lightly defended areas. It is my understanding that the JCS and CIA are also in substantial agreement that current coverage in North Vietnam has been inadequate; however, the JCS feel that presently available JCS assets can be tasked to provide more of the required data base coverage in North Vietnam and they have recently directed priority tasking to that end. The next few months should indicate whether adequate coverage of North Vietnam can be obtained by these means or whether supplemental coverage by OXCART may be desirable.

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4. In view of the foregoing developments and of the conditions now existant, I now modify this proposal with the following recommendations:

(a) That we deploy the OXCART to Okinawa, beginning 15 July so as to have it in place and operational by mid-August when the weather will begin to improve,

(b) That we decide now that OXCART will be committed as required to obtain photographic coverage over South China and in other areas in China where the U-2 cannot penetrate,

(c) That, at the same time, we hold the OXCART in readiness to obtain photographic coverage of targets in North Vietnam, if required.

5. This proposal is responsive to the continuing urgent need for photographic coverage of South China and North Vietnam. In this connection, it is my understanding that the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board has recently reviewed the status of our existing reconnaissance coverage of North Vietnam and South China and is of the opinion that, from a strictly intelligence point of view, the OXCART should

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be employed in these areas. My proposal likewise is also consistent with the realities of the bad summer weather which has closed in since our original discussion. The proposed schedule provides for an orderly movement of the OXCART to Okinawa in advance of good weather and affords an adequate opportunity

[Redacted]

W. F. Raborn

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