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17 June 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Reactions to Reconnaissance by OXCART vehicles over  
North Vietnam and China

1. We have reviewed SNIE 10-2-66 on this subject, considering particularly whether the judgments in that paper should be changed in view of the current political situation in China. In our opinion the estimate is still valid.

2. It is possible that the Chinese might, because of their current troubles, be apprehensive lest the US was preparing some military move to take advantage of these troubles. They might therefore be somewhat more alarmed than usual by the beginnings of this reconnaissance program. Nevertheless, we would reaffirm the estimate, which said that there is only "some chance" that the Chinese would conclude that the US was collecting target data for use at an early date. And we would reaffirm the estimate that China would not be likely to react with drastic military moves.

3. In view of the worldwide speculation about the political turmoil in China, any dramatic incident which might arise from the

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reconnaissance would probably impel many to criticize the US for poor timing of another intelligence enterprise. But we do not think that this would significantly change the general reactions estimated in the SNIE.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

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SHERMAN KENT  
Chairman

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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