

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

FEB 8 1961

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in reply to your letter of 19 January 1961 calling my attention to certain aspects of the NANCY RAE project.

According to information furnished to my staff by Air Force Operations personnel, the following factors make it undesirable to operate NANCY RAE from Shemya:

a. Crosswinds are of such intensity as to make it impossible for a KC-135 to take off safely 20% of the time.

b. The weather generally is bad for aircraft operations, especially during the summer months.

c. The airstrip at Shemya has deteriorated to the extent that sustained operations are infeasible, maximum takeoff and landing weights for the surface being 150,000 pounds while the KC-135 loaded for NANCY RAE operations weighs 250,000 pounds.

d. Support facilities including the rebuilding of the runway and construction of a suitable all-weather hangar and ready room would cost from \$8.5 million to \$11.1 million beyond the amount of \$6 million originally estimated for the project. (To date, \$7.5 million, in addition to the cost of the aircraft, has been made available for that portion of the project originally priced at \$6 million.)

e. Shemya is not included as an active base in Air Force approved war plans, and there are no funds included in the FY 1962 Budget for improvements.

With this background, I find myself confronted with several courses of action, including:

1. to cancel the project;
2. to request the Central Intelligence Agency to provide one-third of the added cost;

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3. to order the Air Force to defer other projects and reprogram funds necessary to rebuild the Shemya airstrip and construct the necessary hangar and support facilities;
4. to operate NANCY RAE from Eielson AFB;
5. to use the aircraft and its equipment on our own ranges or against other targets of opportunity, such as long-range Russian shots in the Pacific.

The Air Force will continue to operate, maintain, and support the NANCY RAE project from Eielson AFB and in accordance with the memorandum of 20 June 1960. If the possibility suggested in the attachment to your letter does come about or other adverse factors indicate that successful operations cannot be carried on from Eielson, further consideration will be given to the most desirable utilization of this aircraft.

Sincerely yours,

Signed
ROSWELL L. GILPATRICK
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Honorable Allen W. Dulles

Chairman, United States
Intelligence Board

TOP SECRET

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Remarks:
For forwarding to [Redacted] for necessary action. The original of this letter will be shown to the Director and General Cabell.

Reproduced and circulated as USIB-D-64. 2/17, 15 Feb 1961.

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FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO. DATE
Asst. to the DCI 2/13/61

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