

SECRET

[Redacted]

25X1

Copy 849
13 FEB 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Vice Admiral John C. Thach, USN, Deputy Chief of Naval Office for Air, regarding U-2 Carrier Capability, 10 February

1. At Captain Gerald F. Celleran's suggestion I met with Admiral Thach in his office to bring him up to date on the current status of U-2 carrier mods, plans for carrier qualifications tests on the USS Ranger, 29 February and following, and to give him a glimpse into the future about how we might make use of the U-2 carrier version, once the capability is established. Present at the meeting in Admiral Thach's office were, in addition to Thach and Celleran, Captain John Fair, USN OP 506, and Rear Admiral W. F. Bringle, USN, Chief of Aviation Plans for Admiral Thach.

2. I briefly summarized the plan to date, and told Admiral Thach of our initial carrier arrangements at Edwards AFB and our success, and with Celleran's assistance filled him in on planning for the Ranger operation (Whale Tale II) at the end of the month. I said that if everything went well we might have a two plane U-2 G capability shortly after the first of March.

3. I then enumerated some of the various intelligence requirements which might well be fulfilled by the use of the U-2 G in the carrier operation, beginning 15 March or thereabouts. Specifically these were:

a.

b.

[Redacted]

25X1

c. Reconnaissance of SEA from the South China Sea.

In discussing the above I noted to Admiral Thach that we had advised Admiral Felt last week of our carrier capability and, that following instructions

SECRET

Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

SECRET

[redacted]
Page 3

relayed to him through [redacted] Admiral Felt had sent a message to Admiral Thach acknowledging the briefing and requesting information on the logistics aspects of the U-2 G carrier version. I gave a copy of this message to Admiral Thach in the meeting and he indicated that he would soon have answers to the questions, which he would relay to Felt via our channel once more.

4. Thach said that, in view of the publicity which would attend the movement [redacted] he felt it might be better to meet any commitments in that area by detaching what he called the "South China Sea carriers" to do the job as an individual, and presumably less public, capability. In addition to the possible tasks which I enumerated to Thach above, I mentioned that it might well be feasible to consider the use of [redacted] as our potential base of emergency operations in that area as called out in [redacted] wherein a statement was made that such a capability for basing U-2 operations against targets [redacted] should be brought to term.

5. Admiral Thach then raised with me the question of [redacted] requirements of the Agency, noting that he was having lunch on 11 February with Dr. Fubini, at the latter's request, to discuss acquisition of several (Thach said three) of these aircraft from the Navy. Thach asked me particularly what the mission of the [redacted] aircraft was, what territory they covered, whether photography was involved, and how successful the program had been in the past. These questions I had no difficulty dealing with, after which he expressed his concern lest the Navy be deprived of [redacted] with neither a commensurate dollar refund nor an add-on-buy the end of the production line. I explained to him that we, as responsible program officers for [redacted] had requested sufficient monies in the Fiscal Year 1964 budget to actually procure the two aircraft required initially. However, I told him that in the budget process the DNRO had directed that we remove [redacted] and look to DOD simply for the airplanes rather than the money with which to buy them. I told him that I had been concerned for some months over the fact that, as far as I

SECRET

SECRET

[Redacted]

Page 3

25X1

know, no formal notification had been given Navy about the decision reached at the NRO level. Admiral Thach said he was certain this was the subject of his lunch meeting with Dr. Fubini on 11 February. In summary, the meeting was extremely pleasant and there appeared to be no question that Thach would be willing to support any request for directed employment of the carrier capability.

[Redacted]

25X1

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Deputy Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

cc: DD/S&T

Distribution:

- #1 - DD/S&T**
- #2 - D/FA/OSA**
- #3 - D/Tech/OSA**
- #4 - SS/OSA**
- #5 - PS/OSA**
- #6 - Idealist Division**
- #7 - DAD/OSA**
- #8 - Chrono**
- #9 - RB/OSA**

O/DAD/OSA/JACunningham/mcm(12 Feb 64)

SECRET