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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

30 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Science and Technology)

SUBJECT: Explanation of the COMOR Working Group's Views on the Importance of Targets for the [redacted] Mission

1. On Monday morning, 28 October, I talked with [redacted] of OSA and was advised that in addition to coverage of the NEFA area of the Sino-Indian border another mission was planned to cover some transportation routes between the NEFA area and the Ladakh area. In my own mind, I doubted that this intermediate area warranted a special mission. I accordingly dispatched the following telecon to the COMOR and Working Group members:

"In case of Sino-Indian border, COMOR at last meeting (COMOR-M-208, para 3a) indicated that except for the NEFA area further coverage not necessary at this time. However, Chairman advised by Operations that it wishes a confirmation this statement takes account of fact that there are transportation targets in area between NEFA and Ladakh for which a mission is planned. Chairman requested Working Group to consider this at meeting 29 October, to advise Chairman immediately as well as principals on COMOR so that by cob on that date Chairman will have views to transmit to Operations.

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2. [redacted] of OSA also advised of the conclusion of the COMOR Working Group on Tuesday, 29 October, that they did not consider these targets by themselves to be of important significance so as to warrant a special mission.

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3. My concern in this regard was that COMOR must remain as alert as possible with regard to the coverage of COMOR targets, particularly in high risk areas, in order that risk is not taken needlessly. Were that mission [redacted] [redacted] to have failed, the first immediate question would likely have been "Why did it go?" We need to be able to answer that question.

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4. On the other hand, needless to say, if the Secretary of Defense wants this area and the Director is willing to instruct it to be obtained, the matter is out of our hands.

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[redacted]

James Q. Reber
Chairman

Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

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