

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

OUTSIDE SYSTEM

POSSIBLE ACTION ITEM

27 October 1971

THOMAS LORD

MEMORANDUM FOR: ~~GENERAL HALE~~

FROM: PETER JESSUP *PJ*

SUBJECT: Director Helms' Concept of Limited Technological Assistance to China for Their Space Reconnaissance Capability

It seems to me that this idea is a bit "previous" for staffing and putting into 40 Committee machinery.

It is a new idea which I would suggest be discussed privately between HAK and Dick Helms when they see each other on other matters on Friday. It has the possibility of being a useful proposal for higher authority to take with him on his visit. HAK, with his present exclusive access to "that country," might be better able to evaluate the concept following his two visits.

It should, in my opinion, be held very closely because it is liable to misinterpretation if it leaks out.

Therefore, it is my recommendation that you pass it to HAK as is on a "floating" basis and, if it floats, meticulous staff work can be undertaken promptly.

Attachment

Memo 10/22/71 to HAK from DCI
(TS#202361-72, Cy 1)

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Would like his suggestions in informal way.

Wier - Perhaps we can take up elliptically on Beijing.

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

22 October 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry Kissinger

As you know, we now have [redacted] evidence that the Chinese are building facilities which can support a rather extensive space program. In addition,

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[redacted]

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[redacted] At one point the trade official representing the Chinese said that he has been told by the Chinese that "three-dimensional photographic technology is an absolute necessity for China's space program. The technology must be obtained." It therefore seems very likely that one of the major thrusts of the Chinese program will be to acquire a satellite reconnaissance capability. I would like to raise the question whether it would be in our interest to assist them in this objective.

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Much of our confidence that the Soviets will not interfere with our reconnaissance satellites derives from our assumption that the Soviets rely heavily on their own satellites for intelligence about us and the Chinese, and would not be likely to take actions which might jeopardize their own capability. It seems worth asking, therefore, whether we could enhance the safety of our program from future interference by the Chinese by encouraging them to acquire and rely on a reconnaissance program of their own.

If you think this is worth pursuing further I can study and report back to you some possibilities for making it easy for the Chinese to get necessary information and equipment for a useful, but not very high quality, capability.

Richard Helms

Richard Helms
Director

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