

MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

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10 Nov. 52

SUBJECT: Personnel balloons

I do not know whether this subject has ever been considered by the [REDACTED] but I pass along the following information in view of the fact that ~~the~~ other branches of ~~EE~~ [REDACTED] that I know of) are taking an interest and it may possibly be worth consideration by our branch also.

Last Friday, 7 November, I had the opportunity to view some moving pictures of the latest test trials of personnel balloons conducted by the Office of Research and Development. These balloons are 25' and 30' high and are made of clear plastic. They are capable of carrying one or two men and from 500 to over 900 pounds in addition. The balloons can be launched on land or sea by one or two men. They are capable of traveling several hundred miles in one night and are very difficult to detect with radar. The tests showed that great accuracy can be obtained by a skillful pilot.

Possible uses for these balloons might include the following:

- (1) caching of arms, W/T, and supplies;
- (2) caching the balloons themselves to be used for escape and evasion;
- (3) infiltration of personnel (this will assume more importance in our area as the East German border controls become more stringent).

The SE division now has purchased over 50 of these balloons. Their main interest, I understand, is in category (3) above.

A training program is now being set up for Agency personnel so that they may in turn train indigenous agents in the operation of balloons.

I realize that the above information is inadequate upon which to base judgment. However, I have talked with [REDACTED] of R&D who is the head of the overall program and he informs me that he would be glad to brief

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you fully and show you his films in your office at your convenience.

If you are interested I will be glad to make an appointment for you.

