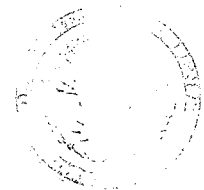


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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



6 November 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR SAFSS (Colonel Sweeney) <sup>5</sup>

Handle via BVERMAN  
Control System

SUBJECT: Director's Report for the EXCOM

In view of Mr. Cline's 4 September 1970 memorandum and the recent briefings presented to the COMIREX and State Department, believe it would be useful to include the attached summary of aircraft and drone resources in the Director's Report.

FRANK W. HARTLEY, Jr.  
Colonel, USAF  
Director, Program D

1 Attachment  
Summary

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TAGBOARD ~~TOP SECRET~~ IDEALIST

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AIRCRAFT AND DRONESHandle via BYEMAN  
Control SystemINTRODUCTION

In light of Mr. Cline's 4 Sep 70 memorandum to Mr. Helms addressing coverage of both crisis and strategic reconnaissance, it is useful to briefly review existing NRP aircraft and drone resources that could be used to supplement satellite reconnaissance. The use of aircraft and drones in a denied overflight role has been restricted in recent years, probably more from political considerations - "their provocative nature" - than from actual risk assessment. The aircraft are equipped with defensive systems that enable penetration over denied territory. These resources are in being, and in addition, they represent an especially valuable asset for use in a permissive overflight environment, i.e.: Project Even Steven, or for the stand-off, peripheral collection mode.

THE TAGBOARD DRONE

Twenty (20) TAGBOARD drones remain in the inventory today. Six of these are maintained at Beale AFB in an operational status to provide a quick response capability. Unfortunately, the system has not yet proven itself in an operational environment. I believe we should have a better appreciation for the capabilities of this drone after the pending South China mission. Potentially the operating characteristics of TAGBOARD offer an excellent means to supplement the satellites in both crisis and strategic reconnaissance.

U-2 AIRCRAFT

Currently the CIA and Air Force each maintain a six aircraft U-2R fleet. The aircraft are used primarily in photo reconnaissance missions in the Mid-East, SEA, Cuba and off the coast of China. In addition, as a result of stated NSA requirements, the NRP is buying \$5.4M [redacted] equipment for the Air Force fleet in FY-71. These [redacted] equipped aircraft will be ready for deployment to any overseas operating location by March of 1971. As evidenced by the current use of the U-2R in the Mid-East and considering the expanded [redacted] capability of the Air Force fleet, it appears likely that there will be increased future utilization of the U-2R fleet.

Attachment to:  
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Control SystemSR-71 AIRCRAFT

The Air Force maintains a total of 16 SR-71 aircraft, operating from the home base (Beale AFB) and from Kadena AB, Okinawa against requirements in SEA and North Korea. Current plans are to reduce the number of SR-71's flying from 16 to 12 starting in FY-72. An enhanced crisis response capability could be provided by retaining the 16 aircraft fleet.

AIRCRAFT IN STORAGE

Ten (10) of the older model U-2C/G aircraft and five (5) of the nine (9) Oxcart (A-12) aircraft in storage could be returned to an operational configuration if there was sufficient need.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

It must be recognized that the aircraft and drone systems described above, i.e., U-2, SR-71, and TAGBOARD, came off the drawing boards in 1954, 1959, and 1963 respectively. There have been a number of new system studies since then, but no actual hardware developments. If a continuing need is visualized for aircraft or drones to supplement satellite coverage in the future, I would propose further study of suitable airborne platforms capable of meeting projected future threats.

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