[redacted] TOP SECRET [redacted]

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19 September 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Plans

SUBJECT : KH-4 and [redacted] Satellite Scheduling to Meet a Crisis Situation

1. The two photographic satellite reconnaissance systems now in use do not provide a significant capability for quick reaction use in a crisis situation. Even if all components are readily available, about fifteen days are required from the decision to the actual launch. Both systems can be assembled and set on the launch pad in readiness for launch, but can only be held that way for a few days and then must be recycled, i.e., batteries recharged, boosters purged and refueled, rechecking certain components, and some retesting. Neither program provides more than one payload at a time which could be used in advance of a scheduled launch date. Even with maximum contractor effort and additional funds no more than four photographic reconnaissance satellites could be launched between now and 1 January 1970. New programs are under consideration which would provide much improved crisis capability, but they are several years away from any possible use.

2. An additional limitation on use of reconnaissance satellites in crisis situations is the time between launch of the system and the availability of photographs. Weather conditions might prevent photographs of the desired area for at least several days. The film must then be received, returned to the US and processed. As an example, the minimum time from the taking of a photograph in China to viewing of the film is about two to two and one-half days.

/s/ [redacted]
[redacted]
Deputy Director
for
Science and Technology

[redacted] TOP SECRET

SUBJECT: KH-4 and [redacted] Satellite Scheduling to Meet a Crisis Situation

Distribution:

Cy [redacted]

[redacted] /John N. McMahon:bg/7905 (19 September 1969)

[redacted]

[redacted]
Copy [redacted]
11 September 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT : KH4 and [redacted] Scheduling to Meet a Crisis Situation

1. Current launch schedule and mission durations through October 1970:

17 September 1969 - KH4 - 16 days

[redacted]

26 November 1969 - KH4 - 19 days

[redacted]

18 February 1970 - KH4 - 19 days

[redacted]

20 May 1970 - KH4 - 19 days

[redacted]

19 August 1970 - KH4 - 19 days

[redacted]

[redacted]

KH4 - FY 70 - 5 launches
FY 71 - 5 launches
FY 72 - 2 launches

2. PAD holds:

[redacted]

[redacted]

SUBJECT: KH4 and [redacted] Scheduling to Meet a Crisis Situation

KH4 - can hold the 17 September launch on PAD for 20 days. Other launches can be held on PAD for 22 days and then must be recycled to launch -15 days.

3. Possibility of collapsing schedules:

[redacted]

KH4 - The 17 September launch cannot be accelerated. The 26 November launch could be moved to 12 November with maximum overtime and no PAD problems if go-ahead is given by 12 September. A day-for-day slip would occur for any delay in go-ahead after 12 September. Following the 17 September launch, the PAD must be modified to accommodate a new command system already installed in all other vehicles.

To launch remaining vehicles earlier, assembly and testing of payloads must be rescheduled, and additional costs would be incurred. An estimate is not available without more specific requirements.

4. Earliest possible crisis schedule through December 1969 could be:

17 September 1969 - KH4

[redacted]

12 November 1969 - KH4

Possibly late [redacted]

The above schedule would require maximum contractor effort.

[redacted]

SUBJECT: KH4 and [redacted] Scheduling to Meet a Crisis Situation

5. Collapsing of assembly and test schedules and supporting two missions simultaneously could affect reliability. The above schedule does not mean that two missions would necessarily be up simultaneously since mission duration in a crisis would presumably be shortened. Recovery is possible on any pass over Hawaii and this is usually about 8 revs (12 hours) after coverage of the Sino-Soviet Bloc.

6. Time from film recovery to developed film available for viewing at [redacted] is 1 1/2 - 2 days. Minimum time from photograph of a target in China to viewing of film is about 2 - 2 1/2 days. (Total processing time at [redacted] is 77 hours. NPIC normally receives the film 96 hours after recovery.)

7. The probability of taking one photograph of a target in China and getting a cloud free photograph varies from .2 to .9 during the next few months depending on target location. Therefore, more than one pass over a target may be necessary for a clear view. In the case of [redacted] to achieve minimum time to launch after go-ahead, the orbit must have been pre-selected. This means that targets on which to base orbit selection must be provided 17 days prior to launch. KH4 can be targeted on-orbit from a general purpose orbit.

8. If the present launch schedule is accelerated, consideration would have to be given to the adequacy of the remaining KH4 vehicles to meet future requirements and insure appropriate overlap with [redacted] which is scheduled for launch in December 1970. Estimated costs for three more KH4 launches are [redacted] launch costs are estimated at [redacted] per launch.

/s/ John N. McMahon

JOHN N. McMAHON

[redacted]

Brian B, Cy [redacted]

Distribution:

[redacted]

HANDLE VIA [redacted] KEYHOLE CONTROL JOINTLY

[redacted]

(11 September 1969)

2 October 1969

This is what was included in the Agency's paper on the Sino-Soviet Bloc situation.

3. Present overhead reconnaissance capabilities would be targeted, to the maximum extent, against the area of hostilities and advanced planning should be undertaken to be sure that this can be accomplished with a minimum of delay. The telescoping of missions over the short term to reduce the gap between missions as currently planned has limited possibilities. (See [redacted] dated 19 September which was included as note.)

J. McMahon