

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

17 NOV 1971

BYE 9409-71

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Reconnaissance Office

SUBJECT: PINE RIDGE Program

1. As you recall, the EXCOM was briefed on the PINE RIDGE proposal on 29 January 1971, and funds were requested to initiate a radar cross section (RCS) feasibility test program. That request for funds was disapproved. Since that time, however, we have continued to examine the broad reconnaissance problem because of the continuing need to acquire strategic intelligence on a covert basis. Radar cross section work in other projects and a recent informal study concerning alternatives in event of the denial of reconnaissance satellites clearly point up the potential of a low RCS vehicle.

2. We now understand that DOD plans to continue examining the potential of a low RCS vehicle, such as PINE RIDGE, by requesting open proposals within the next few weeks and subsequently continuing with "white" contracting. We believe that this work may lead to a vehicle which can operate covertly and thus fulfill the need in procuring strategic intelligence in an environment in which a U. S. presence is not known. However, we also believe that open requests for proposals will simply broadcast U. S. intentions and effectively negate use of this system as a covert vehicle. It would also precipitate early countermeasures development which would considerably detract from its capability in any environment.

3. As there is a continuing requirement for a covert strategic intelligence vehicle, we believe that open proposals should not be solicited and that funds for "black" contracting should be reallocated from DOD to the NRO. Our in-house technical talent and manage-

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ment procedures would preserve the maximum potential of such a system. Finally, as in the past, we would make all technology available to other users for whatever benefits they might derive and we could effect any additional covert procurement that is required.



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for CARL E. DUCKETT
Director, CIA Reconnaissance Programs

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