



INTELLIGENCE

21 OCT 1975

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Satellite Reconnaissance - INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

Reference: Memorandum for ASD(I) from the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, dated 10 October 1975, subject as above

During your recent visit to Sunnyvale you posed questions concerning overhead tasking priorities for coverage of key border areas, and Soviet satellite surveillance of Chinese ICBM activities. DIA has researched both matters and their findings are provided in the following paragraphs.

All of the areas and targets to which you referred were successfully covered during the HEXAGON (KH-9) mission of 8 June-6 October 1975. The Pakistan/Afghan border, Iran-Iraq frontier and the South African nuclear plant were specifically identified as "current high interest" in the basic pre-mission tasking guidance from the USIB Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation (COMIREX), to the NRO. The Morocco-Spanish Sahara requirement was levied by special DIA action on 23 July 1975, while Tibet is a standing USIB six-month coverage requirement.

Concerning responsiveness of overhead photoreconnaissance priorities to current political realities, the existing system appears to be adequate. Prior to each GAMBIT or HEXAGON mission the entire community is provided ample opportunity to express their collection needs in light of current intelligence problems. These needs are accorded the highest priority by the COMIREX and are provided to the NRO as pre-mission guidance. Moreover, through the course of an average mission, approximately 80 new high priority requirements are added to the original pre-mission tasking. DIA advises that every effort has been and will be made to insure that tasking of HEXAGON and GAMBIT missions is fully responsive to current political and military situations.

Regarding Soviet coverage and awareness of PRC ICBM activities, the Soviets probably do not have a full understanding of the Chinese offensive ballistic-missile deployment. DIA analysis of Soviet high-resolution

Classified by BYEMAN-1  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. EXEMPTION CATEGORY Para SB(2)&(3)  
DECLASSIFY ON Impossible to determine

BYE

66351/75

GAMBIT HEXAGON

HANDLE VIA

BYEMAN-TALENT-KEYHOLE-COMINT

CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY.

WORKING COPY



cy XL

~~TOP SECRET~~BYEMAN-TALENT-KEYHOLE-COMINT  
CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY

photoreconnaissance satellite activity indicates that while some Chinese missile sites have been covered by the Soviets, the CSS-X-13 ICBM silos at Suntien and Tungtao probably have not been photographed. An intercept of a 1975 Soviet message reveals that the Soviets credit the Chinese with 33 operational launch sites. The United States, on the other hand, credits the Chinese with 56 launch sites. There are seven Chinese deployed ballistic missile areas of which the Soviets are probably aware. At these seven deployment areas, the US has identified 39 sites and the Soviets have covered 35 of them. There is no indication that the Soviets have coverage of seven other deployment areas. (See the attached map for precise locations.)

The Soviets launch about 20 high-resolution photoreconnaissance satellites per year. They devote some 20 percent of their photo resources to China and another 20 percent to the US. The system's resolution capability is assessed to be three to five feet, sufficient to detect and locate ballistic missile sites. Because the Chinese deployments are in mountainous terrain, the Soviet low-resolution photoreconnaissance system -- seven to 15-foot resolution -- may not be sufficiently high quality for missile site detection.

*Albert Hall*

Attachment

Albert C. Hall

cc: DIRDIA

Prepared by: 

BYE

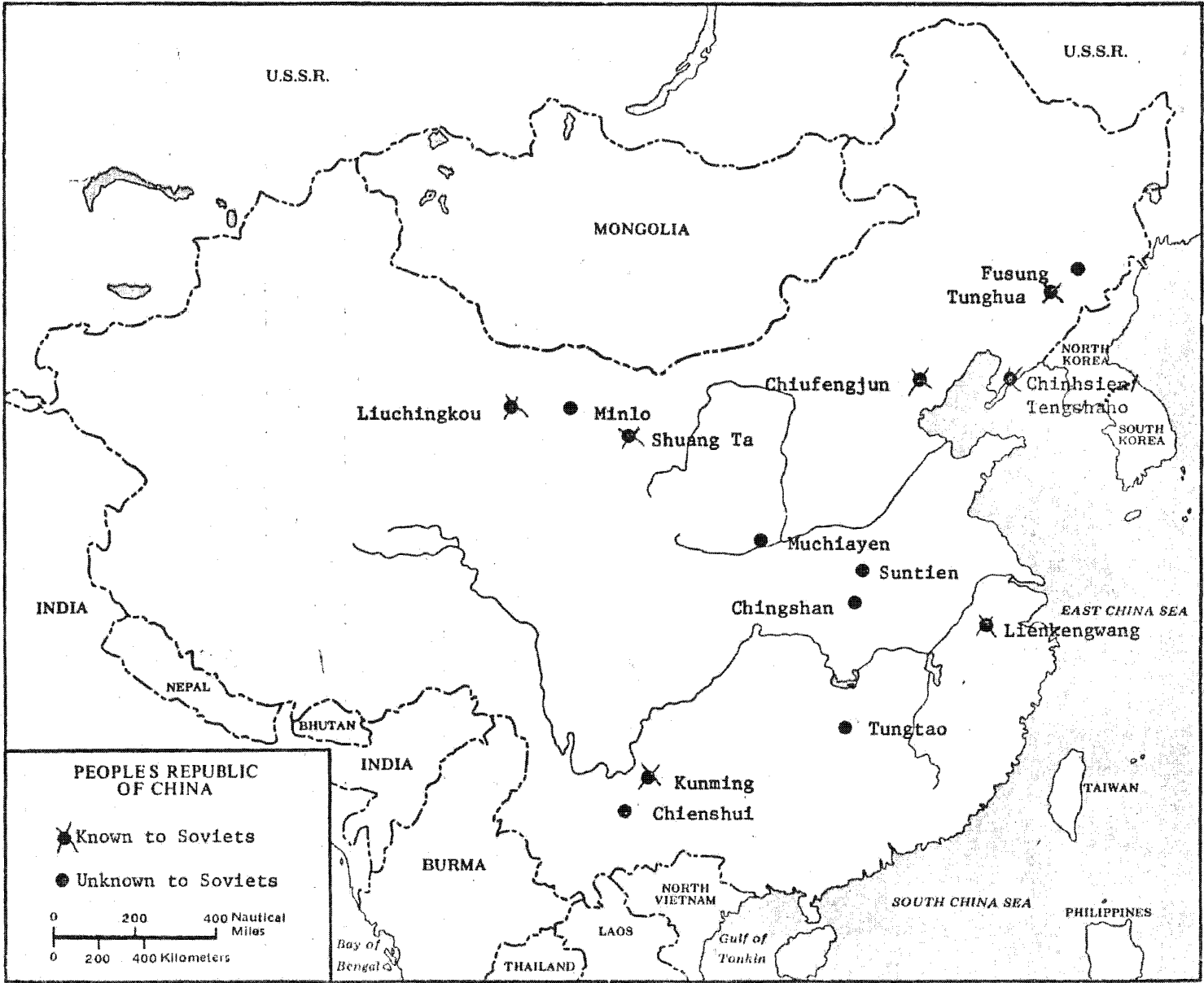
66351/75

~~TOP SECRET~~HANDLE VIA  
BYEMAN-TALENT-KEYHOLE-COMINT  
CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY

~~TOP SECRET EYES ONLY~~

CHINESE BALLISTIC-MISSILE DEPLOYMENT AREAS

CI-CH-1-6/74



Approved for Release: 2025/07/25 C05127921

RYF 66351/75