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WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

9 January 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McLUCAS

SUBJECT: Low Altitude Flight

QUESTION

What are the capabilities and cost/benefit trade offs for GAMBIT operation at lower altitudes?

BACKGROUND

In response to your August request, General King was requested to investigate operation of GAMBIT at lower altitudes (TAB A). His response is at TAB B.

DISCUSSION

With the advent of HEXAGON, GAMBIT operations will presumably emphasize technical intelligence over surveillance, resolution over numbers of targets acquired. Low altitude flight is one method of improving quality, and it is reasonable to push the system to its quality limit. Operation below the spec limit of 65 NM will be more difficult, risky, and costly and should be considered in comparison with alternate approaches, e.g., longer focal length.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the dispatch of the message at the right to General King.

Richard L. Geer
RICHARD L. GEER
Major, USAF

Atchs

TAB A, WHIG 9273

TAB B, CHARGE 0077

~~GAMBIT HEXAGON~~
HANDLE VIA
BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

~~SECRET~~

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R 191640Z
BT
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CATOR PASS CHARGE

~~SECRET~~ 191640Z JAN 70 CITE WHIG 9838

CHARGE
GAMBIT
FOR GENERAL KING FROM DR. MCLUCAS
I APPROVE YOUR PLAN TO APPROACH THE 65 NM LIMIT ON
GAMBIT OPERATIONS.

~~SECRET~~
BT

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