

26 September 1969



MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee,
23 September 1969

PRESENT: Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Packard, Mr. George C.
Denney, Jr. and Lt. General Robert E. Cushman, Jr.

General Ralph D. Steakley was present for Items 2 - 5.
Colonel Alexander Haig was present for Items 2 - 6.
Mr. Wymerley DeR. Coerr was present for the
entire meeting.

1. National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) Annex to the Space Task
Group Report (BYE 13098-69)

a. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of making copies of this highly sensitive NRO Annex available to the full membership of the Space Task Group. It was concluded that because of its sensitivity and lack of general applicability to the basic Space Task Group Report it should not be further distributed.

b. It was agreed that possible future applications of NRO activities in support of NASA, SALT, etc. could be handled on a case by case basis. In this connection, Mr. Packard noted that CIA is working on a paper which will ease the present resolution restrictions on cameras used by NASA in its space vehicles. The Chairman asked that this paper be submitted to the Committee when completed.

c. The Chairman stated that he would forward the NRO Annex to the President with the Committee's endorsement of the recommendation on page 21 and would inform the Vice President that the Annex will not be distributed to the full Space Task Group.

~~TOP SECRET~~HANDLE VIA BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

BYE 106, 266-67

909 26 014 3B

~~TOP SECRET~~HANDLE VIA BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

3. Intelligence Evaluation of the Photographic Reconnaissance Drone Program over South China

a. Mr. Packard and General Steakley strongly supported the JRC and NRO proposals for four 147 H/T drones to be flown over South China in October. They cited the urgent need for updating the base-line priority tactical intelligence on Communist Chinese activities in the areas bordering North Vietnam, Laos and Burma and noted that satellite photography had failed to fill these requirements because of normal heavy cloud cover in the area.

b. General Cushman supported the need for priority tactical intelligence in the border areas and the use of drones as a good vehicle for obtaining this type of information. He observed, however, that not a great deal of information could be expected from these missions which would satisfy strategic intelligence requirements.

c. Mr. Denney expressed the opposition of Department of State to resumption of the drone overflights of South China for the following reasons:

- (1) It is not persuaded that the intelligence requirements and prospects of successful collection override the political considerations.
- (2) The normal heavy cloud cover in the area which precludes obtaining much successful satellite photography also mitigates against productive photographic drone missions even though the drones are much more flexible in their scheduling.
- (3) Politically, the Administration has repeatedly publicly expressed its desire for more friendly relationships with Communist China and has taken steps to ease trade

HANDLE VIA BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM~~TOP SECRET~~

BYE 106,266-69

Copy 3A of 5 copies

-3-

and travel restrictions. Resumption of overflights after an 18 month stand-down and following the expressions of desire for better relations might be interpreted by the Chinese as a sudden harsh reversal in the U.S. attitude toward them.

d. The Chairman and Mr. Mitchell supported the Defense and CIA view that the drone overflight missions should be flown. They pointed out that the U.S. has continued to fly U-2 and other peripheral intelligence collection flights along Communist China coastal areas during the drone stand-down period. They expressed the belief that the Chinese would recognize the drone overflights as an extension of this activity designed to collect border area tactical intelligence and would not be seriously concerned, as they would be in the case of overflights of their strategic installations in other areas.

e. The Chairman stated he would have a memorandum prepared for decision by higher authority expressing the divergent views of the members. He said this would be circulated to each member before it was sent to higher authority in order to assure that each member's views were fairly presented.

4. Proposal for Use of New Type Drone (BYE 78308-69)

a. In supporting the proposal for an operational test over South China of the new high-altitude TAGBOARD drone, Mr. Packard stated that it is essentially designed to collect photography of strategic intelligence interest. It has the same capability as the SR-71 in obtaining broad area coverage in one flight and the advantage of being unmanned.

b. Mr. Denney observed that the State Department's objections to the use of 147 H/T drones over South China, as recorded above, are also applicable to TAGBOARD. He expressed the view that TAGBOARD should undergo further non-operational testing before it is used operationally, and if it must be tested operationally, then he would prefer to see this done over North Vietnam rather than Communist China.

c. Messrs. Mitchell and Packard noted that the cost of any TAGBOARD test is great and that a successful operational test would provide an intelligence return.

d. The Chairman stated that this proposal would also have to be referred to higher authority for decision. Before doing so, he requested that General Steakley prepare a specific proposed TAGBOARD mission listing specific USIB-approved intelligence targets which the Committee could examine and send forward to higher authority with an appropriate memorandum.

BYE 106,266-69

Copy 3 of 5 copies

HANDLE VIA BYE

CONTROL SYSTEM

~~TOP SECRET~~

HANDLE VIA BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM ONLY

5. SAFSS Forecast for September 1969

Although not a scheduled agenda item, the proposal for two SR-71 missions over North Korea contained in the SAFSS forecast for September was discussed briefly (see special minute dated 9 September 1969, BYE 106,264-69). It was agreed that these missions would not be flown at this time in view of negotiations going on in an effort to effect release of the captured helicopter crew now in North Korea.

7. U-2 Deployment Exercise to [redacted] (BYE 9090-69)

The SAFSS paper dated 9 September 1969 setting forth the proposed plan for a U-2R deployment exercise to [redacted], from Edwards Air Force Base, California, received telephonic approval by members of the 303 Committee on 26 September 1969.

should be...
operationally...
prefer to see this done over

Frank M. Chapin
Frank M. Chapin

Distribution

Mr. Mitchell

Mr. Packard

Mr. Johnson

Mr. Helms

HANDLE VIA BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

~~TOP SECRET~~ BYE 106,266-69

~~TOP SECRET~~

9 September 1969

Handle via DYEAN
Control System

HANDLE VIA DYEAN
CONTROL SYSTEM ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Telephonic Approvals by the 303 Committee

For Information:

Dr. McLucas _____

Dr. Naka _____

Col. Allen _____

Please return to Dr. Naka's office for file.

2. SAFSS Forecast for September 1969

The SAFSS forecast for September 1969 was telephonically approved on 30 August with the following restrictions:

- a. All overflights of the China mainland continued to be stood down, but the proposed Photo and ELINT IDEALIST/TACKLE missions were approved with the understanding that there be no approach closer than 20 n.m. to the China mainland.
- b. Approval for the proposed DUCKY ACTION drone flights over South China was withheld pending the receipt of the intelligence study to be circulated to the members by the DDC. (See minute of 11 August 1969, Item 1, EYE 106,264-69)
- c. Approval of the two SR-71 missions over North Korea was deferred until the 303 Committee meeting of mid-September, in view of the status of the captured helicopter crew and possible other considerations.

Frank M. Chapin
Frank M. Chapin

- Distribution
- Mr. Mitchell
 - Mr. Packard
 - Mr. Johnson
 - Mr. Helms

EYE 106,264-69
Copy of 5 copies

88 98

~~TOP SECRET~~

extract (para 2)