

~~TOP SECRET~~

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

June 21, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Notes on the Meeting of June 20 Executive Committee

The June 20, 1969 ExCom meeting was a meeting of principals only for the purpose of discussing, in a general way, certain topics which are listed below. The meeting was not held to reach specific decisions, but to provide for an exchange of views. However, certain tentative decisions were reached and certain general statements of views were made which should be borne in mind as we proceed with our planning for the full ExCom meeting which will be held on August 8. Reference should be made to the agenda for the meeting for further background on the items discussed here.

1. Use of Drones for Peripheral SIGINT in Place of Manned Aircraft.

As stated in the agenda notes, we are proceeding with a [redacted] ELINT package for 147T high-altitude drones. Four prototype systems should be available within a very few months with the 20 drones being equipped and ready to go a few months thereafter. There was general agreement that we should proceed with these 20 drones and then take another look at the overall need for drones for peripheral reconnaissance. There are two main questions. The first deals with the requirement for peripheral reconnaissance. Although I believe all ExCom members recognized the requirement, they questioned whether or not we are flying too many reconnaissance missions and whether we could not scale down the frequency of flights and perhaps even eliminate certain reconnaissance missions altogether. In view of this we should think hard before we spend too much money equipping drones to replace manned aircraft. The other question related to whether or not the 147T drone is the optimum, assuming we accept the requirements for drones. Certain types of reconnaissance are best conducted from a platform which can remain on station for a longer period of time, for example, 24 hours versus 5 hours for the 147T. We should investigate the desirability of an alternative drone program before we commit any further funds to the 147T beyond the 20 now being equipped.

Handle via BYEMAN
COMINT Controls

~~TOP SECRET~~

EXE 110078-60
WORKING COPY

~~TOP SECRET~~

2. SANDY HOOK versus TAGBOARD.

Following the completion of the test program on TAGBOARD, there will be about 16 aircraft left which could be used for training missions or operational missions beginning later this year. There was considerable question in the minds of those present that we could afford a system in which the single mission cost is so high. It was suggested that the missions which we expect to fly, which is something like 3 or 4 missions per year, should be flown to collect real data so that we would begin to develop a feel for the real usefulness of this drone. As for SANDY HOOK, on which only a few million dollars have so far been spent, it was agreed that this was an interesting program from the technology standpoint and that we should go ahead with the \$10 million programmed in 1970 but should hold off on systems start. There are various questions related to materials for the drone, the engine and radar absorption materials which can be answered by a continuing technology program; also, the usefulness of slurry hydrogen as aircraft fuel appears interesting for further exploration.

3. Manned Aircraft Reconnaissance.

There was general agreement that the study proposed in our backup agenda material should be carried out. It was suggested that we go back to the beginning of the U-2 program and trace the historical development thereof and the growth which had led to OXCART, SR-71, etc.

4. Termination of MOL and Initiation of HEXADOR.

It was agreed that we should continue to develop the camera and look at various alternatives for a spacecraft in which to fly the camera. One of these is the HEXAGON spacecraft, but we should look at others. We should also investigate the desirability of starting a system development on January 1, 1970, or July 1, 1970.

5. HEXAGON Overrun and Slip.

A quick but rather thorough review of the HEXAGON program has been conducted in the last two weeks by a group of three, chaired by Dr. Robert Naka. Other members were Colonel Norman, Air Force and of the CIA. The gist of their

~~TOP SECRET~~

recommendations are: that we should revise the CORONA launch schedule to 5-5-2 instead of 6-6-0; that we should fund the HEXAGON as requested by the CIA; that we should conduct another review in about six months to see whether HEXAGON stands a good chance of maintaining its schedule of IOC December 1970 and decide at that time if additional CORONAs should be procured.

The ExCom accepted in a tentative way these recommendations; however, it was decided to have a meeting with Admiral Nimitz and others from Perkin-Elmer at an early date to try to develop a feeling of confidence as to whether the program was now under control and whether further schedule and cost difficulties would arise. Also at such a meeting we would impress on Admiral Nimitz and his key management people the difficulties which are created for us by these slips and overruns and the need to run the program in a more businesslike way. I will meet with the CIA in a day or two to work out a format for the presentation. I believe the presentation should include an introductory statement by the CIA management group, to be followed by the Perkin-Elmer briefing, with a wrap-up by CIA.

6. Readout.

We reported on the beefed up technology program already underway and our plans for further buildup next year. Although considerable discussion took place on this item, no decisions were reached and it was decided to wait until the end of July at which time we would have had a chance to review the report being prepared by a team under Benington's chairmanship. We can then discuss that report at the meeting on August 8.

Handle via BYEMAN
COMINT Controls

3

BYE-12973-69

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

9. Operational Control of Overflight of Denied Territory by Reconnaissance Aircraft.

It was stated by some of the ExCom members that this question has been resolved at a recent 303 committee and need not be discussed at this time.

10. Comparison of Capabilities and Costs of Various Ways of Conducting Crisis Reconnaissance.

Although this item was discussed at some length, it was decided that since the report being prepared by Benington's group bears directly on this subject, we should defer our discussions until that report is available. Some of the candidates for crisis reconnaissance are drones and various satellite systems which could be launched at the time of the crisis or stored in orbit. In the past we have not been willing to develop systems other than drones for this particular use.

At the close of the meeting, it was stated that many of the systems we had been talking about appeared to overlap each other to a considerable extent. It was agreed that we should prepare a kind of report or analysis which shows how these systems line up with respect to each other and so we can see what competes with what in terms of mission capabilities. I will ask our NRO staff to prepare such a document. It should cover the historical development of photo and SIGINT systems and project what our budget and program will look like if we include the various systems we are talking about.



John L. McLucas

Handle via BYEMAN
COMINT Controls

4.

BYE-12973-69

~~TOP SECRET~~

BYE-12973-69, June 21, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Notes on the Meeting
of June 20 Executive Committee

No Attachments

Copy 1 Mr. Packard
2 Mr. Helms
3 Dr. DuBridge
4 Dr. McLucas
5. Dr. Foster

Working Copies

Col. Allen
Capt. Geiger - sanitized
Mr. Reber - 2