

29 December 1969



MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee,
20 December 1969

PRESENT: Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Johnson and
General Cushman. Mr. Packard was out of the city.

Mr. Thomas Karamessines, Mr. Carl Duckett and
Mr. Wymberley DeR. Coerr were present for
Items 1 and 2.

The Chairman opened the meeting stating he had convened it primarily to discuss two budget cuts which had arisen unexpectedly and one which might be raised. He noted that higher authority, in a recent meeting with the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, had agreed to the elimination of the CIA Covert U-2 Reconnaissance Program (IDEALIST). He stated he also believed there was a possibility that the Bureau of the Budget would recommend cancellation of the HEXAGON reconnaissance satellite program. See Regular Minute dated 29 December 1969 for the other activity subjected to a budget cut.

I. CIA Covert U-2 Reconnaissance Program (IDEALIST)

a. Mr. Duckett briefed the Committee amplifying on the points made in the CIA paper dated 18 December (BYE 9228/69) and responding to a number of questions.

b. It was the strong view of the members present that the U.S. should retain this covert reconnaissance capability for contingency use in possible future crisis situations. Cognizance was also taken of the fact that during crisis periods the U-2 photography obtained of Chinese Communist coastal areas is of significant interest to the U.S. and of strategic interest to the Government of the Republic of China (GRC), which does not have access to U.S. satellite photography. The members were unanimous in their belief that removal of the IDEALIST U-2 detachment from Taiwan would result in major political problems with the GRC.

c. The Chairman stated that he thought the Committee should study and review further the feasibilities of continuing, terminating or transferring this activity and make appropriate recommendations to higher authority prior to the next budget submission. In the meantime, a recommendation should be presented to higher authority for the retention of this capability in FY 1971. The members agreed.

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d. On 24 December 1969 higher authority approved a memorandum containing the following recommendation:

"That you approve retention of the CIA covert U-2 reconnaissance program with a budget on the order of [] for FY 1971, with the understanding that the 303 Committee will study this activity further and make appropriate recommendations to you prior to the FY 1972 budget submission."

2. HEXAGON Reconnaissance System

a. In the discussion of the HEXAGON reconnaissance satellite program, Mr. Duckett answered a number of technical questions on HEXAGON versus CORONA/GAMBIT capabilities which reflected that once HEXAGON is operational its high ground resolution photography will take much of the guesswork out of photographic analysis. Additionally, its wider swath and longer life will require fewer launches to maintain surveillance in which we can have confidence over greater areas.

b. It was the unanimous strong view of the members, including Mr. Packard, who while not present had previously conveyed his position to the Chairman, that HEXAGON is a high priority program which should be continued.

3. JRC Schedule for December 1969

The JRC Monthly Reconnaissance Schedule for December 1969 was telephonically approved by 303 Committee principals on 5 December with the following inclusion and the modification recorded in the regular minute dated 29 December 1969:



4. SAFSS Forecast for December 1969

The SAFSS forecast for December 1969 was telephonically approved by 303 Committee principals on 5 December 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.

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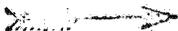
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- b. Action was deferred on the request for the four BUMPY ACTION drone missions over South China in December pending decision by higher authority on the memorandum described in the Committee special minutes dated 1 December 1969 (BYE 106,277-69).
- c. Approval of the proposed SR-71 overflight of North Korea was temporarily deferred in order not to prejudice new developments in the negotiations for release of the captured helicopter crew.



Distribution:

Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Packard
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Helms



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