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~~TS~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

April 29, 1969

*McL*

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McLUCAS

SUBJECT: Replacement of U-2s with SR-71s for Cuban Overflight

Problem:

To examine, in the light of DNRO responsibilities, JCS/CINCSAC actions on Cuban overflight.

Background:

The Director, National Reconnaissance Office is unequivocally responsible for all overflight of denied areas. DOD Directive 5105.23 (see Tab A) states that the DNRO is responsible for "consolidation of all DOD satellite and air vehicle overflight projects... into a single program... and for the complete management and conduct of this Program...." The DOD/CIA Agreement makes a similar assignment.

In spite of these clear statements, the Directors of the National Reconnaissance Office have never taken a strong position to invoke the authority that goes with their responsibility. In the Cuban Crisis, Dr. Charyk found it simple to "delegate" the function to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (and specifically, General Steakley's Joint Reconnaissance Center) because (1) it appeared we were headed toward a wartime situation, (2) the NRO was in an early formative stage, and (3) the JRC had easy access to the unified and specified commands. (This delegation was never legitimized.)

Dr. McMillan was very much interested in setting up a strong aircraft overflight organization but abandoned an excellent plan when he and Under Secretary Gilpatric ran into unexpected opposition from

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the DCI (Mr. McCone). Dr. Flax often spoke of the need for sorting out his relationship with the JCS on this matter.

Recently, your staff has worked with the JRC, and General Steakley in particular, in preliminary discussions directed toward formalizing roles for the NRO and JCS. The most reasonable and acceptable solution appears to be one in which the DNRO clearly exercises total management responsibility for aircraft overflight and the JCS exercises operational responsibility delegated by the DNRO.

Present Status:

We have received a memorandum from General Steakley (see Tab B) in which he states that CINCSAC has recommended that SR-71s replace U-2s for Cuban overflight and that our GLASS LAMP missions are stood down pending investigation by the JCS. This recommendation is within JCS's recognized functions; however, (1) the decision to stand down GLASS LAMP and (2) the final decision on the JCS's recommendations are your responsibility.

Alternatives:

Several options are open.

1. Ignore the problem. This has the advantage of "making no waves" and of tacitly continuing the pattern of nolo contendere followed by your predecessors. Disadvantages: (1) the tacit acceptance is illegal at best, i.e., the DNRO is not empowered to "delegate" management control of GLASS LAMP; (2) the JCS activity is, in this instance, managerial, not operational; (3) the USIB holds you, not the JCS, responsible for GLASS LAMP collection.

2. Blast the JCS. Advantages: (1) this establishes the DNRO as being strongly interested in aircraft overflight (rather than preoccupied by satellites); (2) it forces recognition of the functional problem; and (3) it stands down further functional incursions until the main issue is resolved. Disadvantages: (1) the JCS action may be well-intended (after all, they did tell us what they were doing); (2) it's really our fault

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that the JCS are this deeply in our business, and (3) there should be a gentleman's solution to this problem.

3. Negotiate with General Steakley. This option (1) gives you an opportunity to meet General Steakley, (2) lets you explore the JCS's motives and intentions, (3) permits you to register your concern informally, and (4) keeps your follow-on actions flexible. Disadvantages: none that I can see.

Recommendation:

I recommend that you follow Option 3. We are not prepared to open the main issue at this time but preliminary discussions should not hurt our case (we have had an "NRO aircraft package" under preparation and will forward it to you by next week). The key points to establish with General Steakley -- and perhaps to obtain his willing concurrence on -- are these:

1. The DNRO has total management responsibility for GLASS LAMP.
2. The DNRO proposes, in the near future, to legalize the JCS as having total operational responsibility for GLASS LAMP.
3. A GLASS LAMP stand down is a managerial decision.
4. It would be useful for General Steakley to coordinate the JCS study recommendations with you prior to sending them to the JCS or Secretary of Defense.

  
PAUL E. WORTHMAN  
Colonel, USAF

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THE JOINT STAFF

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301



J-3M 834-69  
26 April 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR Director, (S) National Reconnaissance Office  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: Replacement of the U-2 with the SR-71 for  
Cuban Overflight (TS)

1. On 18 April 1969, the Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Air Command (CINCSAC), recommended that consideration be given to replacing the U-2 with the SR-71 for the reconnaissance effort over Cuba. The basis for his concern was the recent shoot-down of the EC-121 in the Sea of Japan.

2. A JCS paper is being prepared that will provide a response to CINCSAC. It is expected that the paper will be approved by 2 May 1969. Pending the results of this investigation, GLASS LAMP U-2 missions are not being flown over Cuba.

*Ralph D. Steakley*

RALPH D. STEAKLEY  
Brig General, USAF  
Deputy Director  
for Reconnaissance  
Operations Directorate

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