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27 March 1969

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 25 March 1969

PRESENT: Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Elliot U. Richardson,
Mr. Packard, and Mr. Helms.Colonel Alexander Haig and Mr. William Trueheart were
present for all items.1. U-2 Photographic Reconnaissance of China (BYE 8666-69)

a. The Chairman asked for comments on the proposed U-2 mission in the light of the COMIREX intelligence rationale and the State Department's paper, plus Ambassador Green's message, opposing the mission for political reasons.

b. A spirited discussion followed. Mr. Helms, supported by Mr. Packard, felt that the intelligence to be gained was of considerable value. He believed the State paper was overweighted on the possible reactions of the Chinese Communists to the overflight, but in view of the strong State Department position he could not say the situation was so critical that he should insist on the mission at this time.

c. In further discussion, the Chairman cautioned that no one should adopt a position for or against this type of operation in general. Each individual mission proposal should be considered on a case by case basis balancing the intelligence value against the political implications. Where necessary, options can be presented to higher authority.

d. The Chairman suggested that this mission proposal be held in abeyance for three months while an effort is made to fulfill the intelligence requirements via satellites and any other means available. At the end of this period, Mr. Helms would report back on what requirements had been satisfied and what gaps still remained. The U-2 mission would be reconsidered at that time if it still seemed desirable. The members unanimously endorsed this approach.

BYE 12,128/69

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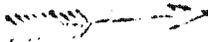
3. Aerial Reconnaissance of South China (see minutes dated 13 March 1969, BYE 12,126-69--Item 2)

On 22 March 1969, higher authority approved the recommendation forwarded by the 303 Committee that aerial reconnaissance of South China be resumed but limited at this time to overflights by the 147 H/T drone. All such missions will be subject to approval by the 303 Committee on a monthly basis in accordance with current procedures governing reconnaissance operations.

Frank M. Chapin
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Distribution

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



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