

~~TOP SECRET~~/BYEMAN

11 August 1969



MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 7 August 1969

PRESENT: Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Packard, Mr. Johnson,  
and Mr. Helms

General Ralph D. Steakley was present for Item 2.  
Colonel Alexander Haig and Mr. William Trueheart  
were present for the entire meeting.

1. Oral Presentation by Department of State on Drone Overflights  
of South China in Light of New Factors in U.S.-Chinese  
Communist Relationships

a. Mr. Johnson referred back to the decision in March 1969 to resume 147 H/T drone overflights of South China and noted that a primary reason for the resumption decision was to issue a signal to the Chinese Communists from the new administration. He stated that since resumption of these overflights had not yet actually taken place, the State Department believed the signalling requirement had now faded in the light of changes in Vietnam and the easing of trade and travel restrictions with Communist China. Since the drones had now been standing down for some 18 months, he thought Peking would interpret the resumption of overflights as a hardening of the U.S. attitude toward China and recommended against it.

b. A discussion ensued on the intelligence requirements; what is being lost, what is needed, what is obtained through other sources, and what will be gained through resumption of overflights. Mr. Helms undertook to prepare and circulate to the members a paper on the subject.

c. It was decided to stand down the drones for the month of August 1969 and re-examine the question in September.

2. SR-71 Photographic Reconnaissance over North Korea (BYE 13063-69) - TAB A

a. The non-agenda proposals for two SR-71 August overflights of North Korea forwarded by the JRC and SAFSS on 7 August were considered next.

b. General Steakley briefed the Committee on the two SR-71 overflights of North Korea flown on 30 June and 2 July 1969, noting that the Chinese Communists tracked the flights carefully, the Soviets did a little, but the North Koreans did not track them at all to the best of our knowledge.

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The Committee approved the JRC and SAFSS proposals that  
[ ] are have SR-71 overflights be authorized for August 1969. Each  
mission is to be flown by one SR-71 aircraft authorized to make  
two passes over North Korea.

4. IDEALIST Photographic Reconnaissance of Muong Soui, Laos  
(AME 9000-69) - TAB B

[ ] The SAFSS paper dated 30 July 1969, proposing an IDEALIST  
photographic mission of Muong Soui, Laos, requested by the Thai  
Government while the IDEALIST aircraft is on a deployment exercise  
to Ban Takhi, Thailand, was telephonically approved on 5 August  
1969.

*Frank M. Chapin*  
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Distribution

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

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