

3 October 1969



## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 30 September 1969

PRESENT: Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Packard, Mr. George C. Denney, Jr.  
and Mr. Helms

General Ralph D. Steakley, Colonel Alexander Haig, and  
Mr. Wymerley DeR. Coerr were present for Items 1 - 4

1. Proposed Mission for New Type Drone (BYE 78344-69)
  - a. Consideration of the proposed specific track for the TAGBOARD drone operational test flight over South China quickly evolved into a general discussion of intelligence requirements and the pros and cons of overflights of the area by various platforms.
  - b. Mr. Helms circulated a paper advocating that the problem of airborne photographic reconnaissance of South China be considered as a whole, not piecemeal, and suggesting that the U-2R piloted by Chinat pilots under the ostensible sponsorship of the GRC is the most suitable and least provocative system to provide the desired intelligence coverage of South China at this time.
  - c. Mr. Packard and General Steakley supported the proposed operational test of the TAGBOARD as well as the previously proposed four 147T drone overflights in October.
  - d. Mr. Denney expressed the State Department's continued opposition to overflights of South China by any reconnaissance platform for political and other reasons detailed in the special minutes of the 303 Committee dated 26 September 1969 (see BYE 106,266-69).
  - e. The Chairman and Mr. Mitchell supported Messrs. Packard and Helms on the need for a resumption of overflights to obtain priority intelligence in the South China border areas.
  - f. The Chairman asked the Executive Secretary to draft a new proposed memorandum for higher authority expressing the divergent views of the members and presenting to him for decision the essential question of whether any aerial overflights of South China for intelligence collection purposes are worth the political risks involved. The Chairman asked that the proposed memorandum be circulated to each member before it is sent to higher authority in order to assure that each member's views are fairly presented.

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4. SAFSS Forecast for October 1969

The SAFSS forecast for October 1969 was approved 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.
- b. Action was deferred on the request for the four BUMPY ACTION drone missions over South China in October pending decision by higher authority on the memorandum described under Item 1 of this minute.

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c. Mr. Packard stated that SR-71 overflights of North Korea had now been suspended for about six weeks while negotiations were under way for the release of a three-man helicopter crew shot down and captured by the North Koreans when they inadvertently strayed into North Korean air space on a training mission. He observed that the negotiations did not seem to be making much headway and advocated an SR-71 overflight in October and approximately one per month thereafter depending upon intelligence requirements.

d. Mr. Helms supported Mr. Packard's proposal observing that the previous three SR-71 overflights had produced significant intelligence on installations and equipment not seen before.

e. Mr. Denney opposed resumption of the overflights saying that insufficient time had passed for successful negotiations and expressing concern that resumption of overflights now would prejudice obtaining the release of the captured crewmen. Mr. Denney was not persuaded of the necessity for approximate monthly missions and asked that COMIREX be asked to identify desired target coverage and establish the required frequency of overflights.

f. On Mr. Denney's latter point, Mr. Packard and General Steakley pointed out that requests for intelligence coverage from Field Commanders must also receive due consideration.

g. Mr. Mitchell expressed the belief that the North Koreans will release the captured crewmen only when it suits their purposes to do so and doubted that an SR-71 overflight now will have much impact on their decision. The Chairman and Messrs. Packard and Helms agreed with this viewpoint.

h. The Chairman stated that in view of the State Department position he would send forward a memorandum to higher authority requesting his decision in the matter.

5. National Reconnaissance Program (NRP) Annex to the Space Task Group Report

On 30 September 1969, higher authority approved the following recommendation appended to the NRP Annex to the Space Task Group Report dated 15 July 1969:

"This Annex recommends on page 21 that you confirm the goals, objectives and capabilities of the National Reconnaissance Program as presented in the report. With this guidance the Secretary of Defense will continue to make program decisions consistent with the needs expressed by the intelligence community.

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"The 303 Committee has reviewed this annex and believes that because of its sensitivity and lack of general applicability to the basic Space Task Group Report it should not be further disseminated to the full membership of the Space Task Group and their staffs.

"The 303 Committee also endorses the above recommendation and  
RECOMMENDS THAT YOU APPROVE IT."

*Frank M. Chapin*

Frank M. Chapin

Distribution

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



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