

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McMILLAN

SUBJECT: NSAM 311 - KH-4, KH-6 [REDACTED] coverage of Cuba

Concerning our recent conversation on the above subject, I wish to reiterate (largely as a means of confirming the re-establishment of a KH-6 launch capability) my understanding of the various [factors] involved. I believe this re-statement will also assist in maintaining the consistency of further discussions which you or I may have with the Deputy Secretary of Defense on this matter.

Regarding the status and capability of the KH-6 satellite reconnaissance system:

1. Operations. We can launch a westbound KH-6 from the Western Test Range in 6 months from "go." The KH-6 can be launched at the ideal coverage inclination angle of 24° . It will make two reconnaissance passes over Cuba every day at (optimal cloud-free) 0930 and 1100 hours local.

2. Logistics and Costs: The KH-6 system is not in the scheduled inventory today. Five payloads are available and can be prepared for flight (ATLAS-AGENA boosted) for [REDACTED]. Lead-time for additional KH-6 payloads is 12 months. After the first five, KH-6's are priced at [REDACTED] each (produced, launched, tracked). With forecast reliability of 80%, 15 KH-6's would be required per year at a cost of [REDACTED].

Handle via [REDACTED]
Control [REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

3. Cuban Coverage: One KH-6 mission will cover Cuba completely four times, producing a monthly average of 94% cloud-free coverage at a nominal resolution of 5 feet.

4. Bonus Coverage: Dependent upon launch angle selected, the KH-6 could be programmed to cover targets in South China between 24°-34° North and 24°-34° South latitude. Approximately 130 of the 468 priority targets in China could be covered (as a bonus to Cuban coverage) by the KH-6 system launched at an inclination angle of 34°.

Based on the information above, I must confess that re-vitalization of the KH-6 appears to me to offer a readily available satellite system, at a reasonable cost, which could be resurrected and maintained for use in contingency situations (assuming inability to continue use of the U-2 overflights) such as we might face again in Cuba. I believe that the KH-6 solution is more acceptable than the thought of placing a number of KH-4 [redacted] on standby for such contingencies, primarily because launching of the KH-6 would not directly conflict with priority commitments of the KH-4 [redacted] systems for coverage of Sino/Soviet bloc targets. As I summarized [redacted] during our conversation: establishing a KH-6 launch capability will "preclude [redacted] dollar argument" over relative priorities which would face us each time launch of either the KH- [redacted]

Handle via [redacted]
Control System

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

was considered against what could be an equally serious problem, but one which had not yet previously been validated as a national priority requirement.

From our discussions, I appreciate that the KH-6 could not be re-established as an instant solution to this problem; that further effort, lead time and funding would be involved. However, I believe this system has definite merit for use as outlined above and I solicit your assistance in bringing to the attention of the Deputy Secretary of Defense the contributions which the KH-6 could make if we are forced to employ alternative means for conducting reconnaissance of such targets as Cuba.

As I indicated during our discussion on this subject, as the opportunity presents itself, I will also attempt to convince Mr. Vance that revitalization of the KH-6 program is very definitely in the national interest.

██████████
██████████
Control System

~~TOP SECRET~~