

DCI BRIEFING FOR
RUSSELL SUBCOMMITTEE

21 February 1967

OXCART

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

- I. I want to inform this committee about a significant change in our aircraft reconnaissance program.
 - A. You are aware of the very-high-performance plane we refer to as OXCART, which was developed as a follow-on to the U-2.
 - B. It has been ready for operational use for more than a year, but no overflights of denied areas have ever been authorized.
 - C. The President recently decided that the program should be terminated and the aircraft placed in storage.
- II. This decision followed a detailed study which CIA, the Defense Department, and the Bureau of the Budget made, of both the OXCART and the Air Force SR-71 projects.
 - A. Both aircraft were considered in this study, because they have similar characteristics, and because there was general agreement that the planned fleets of 30 SR-71s and 10 OXCARTs added up to more aircraft than were needed.

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III. As a result of the study, three alternatives were submitted to the President for reducing the size of the combined fleets. These were

ONE: to retain both fleets at separate bases, and reduce the number by storing 12 of the SR-71 aircraft;

TWO: To retain only the SR-71 aircraft, and assign eight of them to CIA, to be operated [] or

THREE: To retain only the SR-71 aircraft, at a single base under Air Force management, and transfer the covert operational mission to the Strategic Air Command.

IV. The President chose the third course, so the OXCART program will be going out of business.

A. Carrying out the decision will be somewhat complicated, because the SR-71s are not ready for operational use, and probably won't be until late this year.

1. We therefore plan to store only four of our aircraft in July, and the remainder early next year.

2. This will ensure an overflight capability until the SR-71 is ready to go.

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- V. I don't want to say goodbye to the OXCART program without reviewing some of its accomplishments.
- A. We honestly think we came up with the most advanced aircraft in the world.
1. In more than 3,600 flight hours, the planes have put in almost 350 hours at speeds of three or more times the speed of sound.
 2. With air refueling, we have had flights as long as 8,000 miles at these very high speeds.
- B. This is a very complicated aircraft, but the performance records have proved that it could be designed and built for a very high degree of reliability.
- C. The OXCART program, on that basis, should make a significant contribution, not only to future military aircraft, but to the supersonic transport.

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