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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Disposition of the OXCART Assets

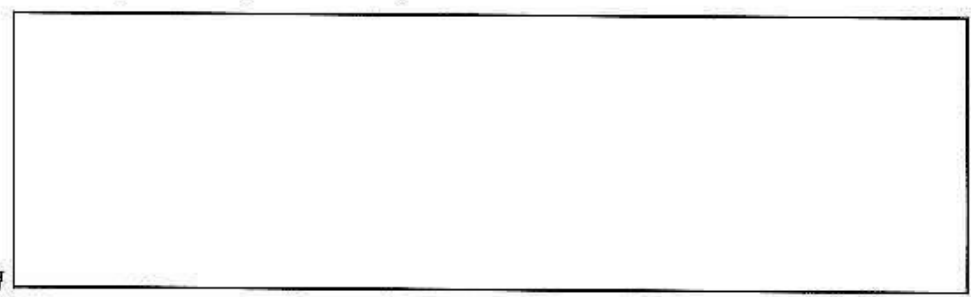
1. This memorandum is for information only.
2. The following is a brief summary of thoughts on why OXCART aircraft should be continued as an Agency operation. This subject is on the Agenda for discussion at the Presidential Foreign Intelligence Board meeting convening Thursday, 15 February 1968.
3. List of "pro" items germane to CIA operating OXCART:
  - a. OXCART is an operationally-proven vehicle reliably capable of meeting in quick reaction fashion most any reconnaissance contingency providing the broadest high resolution coverage of any manned system available to date.
  - b. Because of its unique command and control organization in CIA, it can more directly and quickly respond to national requirements.

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d. Though the aircraft was designed primarily for aerial photographic reconnaissance, CIA has the quick reaction flexibility to incorporate changes to meet various offensive developments by the enemy.

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By AP/ NARA Date 8/16/02

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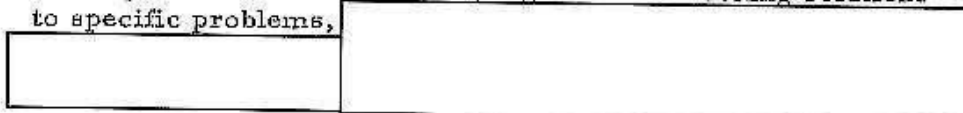
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f. CIA is better able to focus on the limited asset and related problems. (There is a tendency for the military to encompass more than a single program when seeking solutions to specific problems,



g. Related to f. above, CIA is not required to standardize its aircraft and systems, but can enjoy flexibility to meet different situations.

h. The channels for the flow of intelligence to the decision maker at the national level is more direct and timely in the case of a civilian command structure.

i. Past performance - utilization of civilian operation during peacetime and crisis periods (see Tab A).

j. The retention of OXCART provides political authorities another option - if civilian recce capability available for use in peacetime or escalating situations short of war.

k. Civilian/military competition - healthy competition promotes more effective programs on both sides.

l. Security - CIA better able to control compartmentation and need-to-know throughout development and operational phases.

m. Because of CIA's "black" contracting and development procedures, we are better able to employ on a more timely basis new improvements and modifications to keep up with state of art and defensive trends.

n. Cost - no more expensive if OXCART operated by the Agency.

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o. Modus operandi - indoctrinated to be as unobtrusive as possible, avoid publicity and public view. Case in point, Kadena operation has not yet been aired in U.S. press.

A more convenient and brief checklist is attached for your convenience. (See Tab B).

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CARL E. DUCKETT  
Deputy Director  
for  
Science and Technology

Attachments - 2  
Tab A and Tab B

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TAB "B"  
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LIST OF "PRO" ITEMS GERMANE TO CIA OPERATING OXCART

- a. Command and control (Headquarters to Operating Detachment - Direct, compartmented.
- b. Close tie to requirements.
- c.
- d. Security - Compartmentation and need-to-know practiced throughout.

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- e.
- f. Flexibility - Development/operations - All activity accelerated through unorthodox techniques, i. e. contracting, testing, and specially tailored approaches.
- g. Adaptability - Non-standardization, gets things done quickly; not rigidly bound by routine.
- h. Focus - Team's limited one-mission responsibility for development/operation of recce intelligence collection vehicle enables total focus without distraction from primary mission.
- i. Cost - No more expensive if done by Agency.
- j. Political acceptability if civilian operation - Political authorities less prone to inhibit use of asset in peace time or escalating situations.
- k. Modus operandi - Indoctrinated to be as unobtrusive as possible, avoid publicity and public view. Case in point, Kadena operation has not yet been aired in U. S. press.

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TAB "B"  
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1. Loss of OXCART asset - Likely result in CIA getting out of aircraft recce development business. Loss of unique CIA capability in future.

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- n. May be less provocative if a civilian operation. (Powers was tried for espionage as an Agency employee).
- o. Gives political authorities another option - If civilian recce capability available for use in peace-time or escalating situations short of war.
- p. Expertise - Automatically draws on best skills where available during program life. (i. e., military, expert consultants, panels, etc.)
- q. Unique QRC for aircraft/equipment mods - Speedily keeps up with improvements and defensive trends due to collocation in Agency of elements involved.
- r. Civilian/military competition - Healthy, promotes more effective programs.
- s. Past performance - Utilization of civilian operation during peace time and crises. (See Tab "A")
- t. The channels for the flow of intelligence to the national level decision maker is more direct and timely in the case of a civilian command structure.

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