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4 October 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, OSA
Deputy Assistant Director, OSA

SUBJECT : OXCART Operations in the Far East

1. Now that we seem to be narrowing the gap regarding OXCART operational readiness date, I think our attention is drawn to the realistic fact that given the present warming of the Cold War with Russia chances of an overflight of Russia seem less likely than ever. By the same token, the heat of potential war with China is ever increasing, not necessarily in the form of open hostility with the United States, but by possible transgressions against India, Vietnam, Thailand, and other areas of the South-east Asia. In addition, the Chinese Communists' nuclear capability apparently is not that far away on the horizon. Accordingly, although our intelligence gaps may increase regarding the USSR, diplomatic courtship will not permit the thoughts of engaging in an aircraft overflight. As the venting of one's intelligence emotions and the desire to do something with the "O" bird, as well as the increased vulnerability of the U-2 with the additional SAM sites being deployed throughout Communist China, it is quite likely that Communist China will emerge as the prime candidate for OXCART reconnaissance.

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2. The question will then arise from whence should OXCART Chinese overflights originate, [] Eielson, or Kadana? The use of Kadana for other than an emergency recovery base may be denied to us politically. General O'Donnell in Tokyo during my last visit there expressed a hope that we would never use Kadana for an OXCART landing. Possibly we should consider [] and maybe it would be wise at this time to do some planning along the establishment of an OXCART unit [] as a follow-on to the TACKLE program. I am not sure whether such a unit should

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be employed as a staging support group for the "O" bird or whether it should be a permanently established base. At any rate, before we go ahead with the construction of a new hangar [] we ought to determine that if the "O" bird is to be used [] whether the hangar we now intend to construct is located at the right base and facing in the right direction.

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