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MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: OXCART Surfacing as it Relates to On-coming R-12 Delivery

1. This memorandum suggests action on the part of the ADGI; this action is contained in paragraph 5.

2. At the recent R-12 mockup conference in Los Angeles, attended by some 116 Air Force Officers and contractor representatives, Col. Leo P. Geary, USAF, AFIGO-S, in his introductory remarks to the group noted that the Air Force was actively planning to flight test the first R-12 aircraft at Edwards Air Force Base beginning in late July or early August 1964. He was quoted as saying that the Air Force did not intend to participate in any form of contingency planning, or looking toward the initial flight testing of these prototype R-12 aircraft at any place except at Edwards AFB.

3. When I challenged Col. Geary on his alleged statement, he said that Air Force planning for the R-12 at Edwards was moving at full speed, and would continue to do so unless the Director of Central Intelligence, whom he agreed was responsible for the over-all security of the OXCART Program, requested that a plan be developed to accommodate the initial R-12s [redacted] in the interests of the security of the clandestine reconnaissance mission.

4. The fact is that while we have discussed informally with Col. Geary, and through him with DNRO, the possibility of moving the first three or four R-12s [redacted] to purchase additional secure time until approximately 1 January 1965, no formal action has been initiated in the Director's name. Kelly Johnson tells me that from his standpoint at Lockheed there is no problem in doing this and that he can conduct meaningful flight testing on the R-12 in this interval. We do need time to plan for hangar, shop, and living quarters for the additional people who would be sent to [redacted] if this course of action is adopted.

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5. To the best of my recollection we have been working, in one way or another, in surfacing OMCART for almost three years. The latest White House action postponing additional consideration of this subject until mid-February, is but one in a series of such decisions which have had the net effect of permitting us to continue in a secure fashion but without really solving the basic issue of whether the cork should come out of the bottle. I am worried lest we be placing too much reliance upon the inevitability of surfacing prior to July 1964, and I think we should, at a minimum, request the Air Force to work with us on a contingency plan such as that to which I have alluded. I think that such a request can possibly be made within the framework of the NRO relationship and, if you agree, I would ask that you sign the attached memorandum to

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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JACunningham/mcm

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OXCART SURFACING PRESS RELEASE

The capability to conduct aerial reconnaissance has proved of vital importance to the United States and the Free World. In 1959, the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and others urged that a successor to the U-2 aircraft be developed which could fly at three times the speed of sound. The Central Intelligence Agency was directed to proceed with such a development, and the program has been continued by both the Eisenhower and present administrations.

This aircraft was successfully developed by the CIA at a secret test site in the west where it has been flying since the spring of 1962. It has never been used to overfly foreign territory but gives the United States a powerful latent capability to examine promptly crisis situations which endanger world peace such as that created in Cuba by the Soviet Union one year ago.

The development of this remarkable MACH 3 airplane has created an entirely new aircraft technology, which is now being turned to other uses. The Department of Defense is purchasing additional aircraft of this type to be used as long range interceptors for defense of the United States and Canada. These will begin to appear at normal Air Force installations in 1964 and 1965. The development of a MACH 3 supersonic transport aircraft will benefit greatly from the lessons learned here and arrangements are fixed to make the important technical developments, under appropriate safeguards, available to all contractors who are bidding for this contract.

The detailed performance of the CIA airplane will remain strictly classified and no further statements will be issued on this matter.