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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Science and Technology)

SUBJECT: Proposed Transmission of OXCART
Surfacing Background Information to
U. S. Ambassadors

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for your approval. Such recommendation is contained in paragraph 4.

2. We learned late on 28 February that the Department of State (U. Alexis Johnson) had proposed to the Director the following actions to be undertaken by the Department:

- a. Transmit the text of the announcement to be made by the President to each of the Ambassadors.
- b. Transmit to each of the Ambassadors the list of questions and answers prepared for Mr. Salinger's background information.
- c. Acknowledge to each of the Ambassadors that CIA in fact has been the manager of the program.

3. We understand that the Director approved a and b above but disapproved c on the strength of our recommendation against doing so. Upon further reflection we would take strong exception to the proposal that the Ambassadors be provided the questions and answers. The reasons for our objection follow.

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- a. We could not possibly expect each and every Ambassador to properly interpret and reflect the intent of the questions and answers, i. e. protection of the OXCART program.
- b. It is most improbable that foreign governments would expect a given Ambassador to be prepared to respond factually or otherwise beyond the context of an announcement concerning a new weapons system.
- c. Without such background information, the Ambassadors are in a better position to respond truthfully that they know nothing beyond the content of the release. Otherwise a variety of conflicting views could be surfaced in the world forum.
- d. An intelligent review of the questions and answers could lead to the conclusion that CIA is in fact the behind-the-scene manager.
- e. We are concerned over the lack of complete and effective communications security throughout the entire Department communications network, thereby raising the possibility of intercept by the Soviets.

4. It is recommended that the Director be approached with a strong plea that the Department not transmit the background questions and answers to the Ambassadors. If however the Director is still of the view that the Ambassadors should have this background information, then at a minimum they should be instructed not to comment beyond the actual content of the announcement.

(Signed)

[Redacted Signature]

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JACK C. LEDFORD
Colonel USAF
Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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