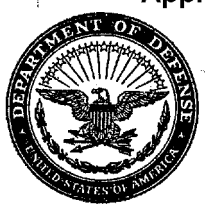


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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



Part III

21 MAY 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN, AD HOC REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: (U) Heavy Bomber Targets

1. Knowledge of the nature and strength of the Soviet intercontinental striking force is of utmost importance for programming Western defense commitments. Though considerable emphasis has been placed on the development of a missile capability, the Soviets have indicated that the manned bomber will continue to occupy an important role in the future. Recent information has indicated the existence of a new generation of bomber aircraft. The meager data now available precludes the determination of type, performance or status of development and production; the possibilities as to type or performance include a modification of present heavy bombers, a new subsonic heavy bomber, a supersonic bomber or a nuclear-propelled aircraft. It is essential that sufficient data be obtained to determine the nature of Soviet trends in further development and employment of long range manned bombers.

2. The heavy bomber acceptance, modification and test centers most likely to be involved in the development of new bombers are Moscow/Shchelkovo and Moscow/Ramenskoye Airfield. Coverage of these targets in addition to Engels, which recently has become closely associated with Moscow/Shchelkovo, should provide information on the nature of new aeronautic configurations and developments, and contribute to heavy bomber aircraft counts. Coverage of Soviet aircraft factories at Kuybyshev, Kazan and Irkutsk - among the largest in the Soviet Union and estimated to be producing or capable of producing heavy bombers - could reveal new aircraft types presently being produced and would provide basic data for more precise estimates of future heavy bomber production capacity.

3. Since the BISON and BEAR force constitutes an important part of the Soviet intercontinental nuclear attack capability, more adequate information on the current Soviet heavy bomber programs still remains an urgent requirement. BISON and BEAR order-of-battle has not been confirmed and the two most important operational heavy bomber bases in Western USSR, Chepelevka and Engels, have been completely closed to Western observation since 1954. Additional BEAR and BISON aircraft are estimated to be based at Belaya Tserkov and Orsha Southwest. Coverage of these bases would pro-

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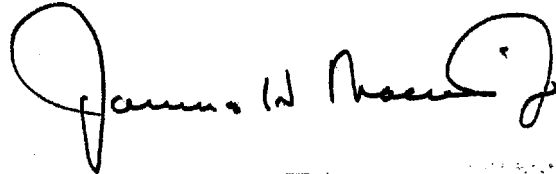
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Memo for Chairman, Ad Hoc Requirements Committee
Subj: (U) Heavy Bomber Targets (Cont'd)

vide long-needed, comprehensive data on heavy bomber operational deployment. Additionally, such photography very likely would yield significant data on special weapons facilities and may provide evidence pointing to re-equipment trends.



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