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Cover

This document contains information
referring to Project UMBRA

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Dr. Charyk

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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20 MAR 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR : Joseph V. Charyk
Under Secretary of the Air Force

SUBJECT : Interdepartmental Cover Support for Project OXCART

REFERENCE : Memo for Under Secretary of the Air Force from DD/R,
Dated 26 February 1962; Same Subject (OXC-3084)

1. Submitted herewith for your review and concurrence is a revised version of the OXCART cover plan which has evolved from a re-examination of the original basic premise that the program, if necessary, would be related to an Air Force interceptor-type aircraft. It should be noted that any "fall-back" explanation of the Project would be taken only if our original position of "no comment" should become untenable.

2. As you know, the actual flight of the aircraft caused all concerned to further scrutinize the cover story, and it was readily apparent that the Air Force interceptor story had obvious loopholes. Primarily, it did not explain the following fundamental questions among several:

a. Why is testing of a type normally accomplished at Edwards Air Force Base [REDACTED]

b. What is the source of funds for the Project?

c. Why was sole source procurement exercised?

d. What are the reasons for such tight security?

3. Accordingly, there is attached hereto a further revision of the OXCART Cover Plan which is submitted for your review and Department of the Air Force concurrence.

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4. This proposal does not change the basic philosophy of "no comment" to routine requests or probes for information. It does alter the fall-back position from interceptor-type aircraft to a Department of Defense research program directed toward a multipurpose, advanced research, satellite launch system (recoverable booster). This approach seems to provide optimum answers to the questions in paragraph 2 above, e.g.:

a. Being in the satellite field, it does not necessarily follow that the testing would have to be performed at Edwards Air Force Base.

b. The Defense Department can explain that the money was spent for procurement of aircraft through a classified mechanism for security reasons and in the national interest.

c. Lockheed Aircraft Corporation's unique experience in advanced aircraft (F-104) and space-satellite fields makes Lockheed particularly qualified for the job of developing a multipurpose advanced aircraft with a special capability as a recoverable booster for a satellite launch system. Additionally, Mr. C. L. Johnson is the most experienced hand in "skunk work" operations. This includes direct control and command from the top (Mr. Johnson) to the working personnel, as well as a direct line to Project Headquarters. It also provides the security, expeditious action, minimum cost, and personnel management required for this type of program.

5. In addition to your concurrence, any suggested amendments or other comments would be appreciated.

HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.
Deputy Director
(Research)

CONCURRENCE:

Joseph V. Charyx

JOSEPH V. CHARYX
Under Secretary of the Air Force

Attachment
OXCART Cover Plan

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Attachment
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INTERDEPARTMENTAL COVER SUPPORT TO PROJECT OXCART

I. PROJECT MISSION

To covertly develop and flight test a newly designed, high performance aircraft having a photographic capability.

- II. A. To conceal the OXCART reconnaissance development effort from unauthorized disclosure.
- B. To conceal specific state-of-the-art accomplishments.
- C. To conceal the number of aircraft under procurement.
- D. To conceal intelligence community (and particularly C.I.A.) participation in the development and ultimate utilization of the OXCART vehicle.
- E. To protect the existence of the OXCART vehicle from public disclosure until observed during some phase of the flight test program.

III. GENERAL COVER PLAN

The development and flight test operations of the mission vehicle will, for cover reasons, be considered a Department of Defense research program being directed toward a multipurpose, advanced research, satellite launch system. The research program will, when necessary, be described as being under the sponsorship of the Department of Defense with control and test operations being supervised by the Department of the Air Force. The details of the

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program will be highly classified and access to any and all information pertaining thereto will be limited and controlled under a strict "need-to-know" policy with access and ostensible clearance authority resting with the Under Secretary of the Air Force.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

To control public statements and unofficial disclosures pertaining to the aircraft, systems development and flight test operations government personnel and all contractors will limit their discussions of matters relating to the program to persons who have been properly OXCART-cleared and approved for access to such information.

In time, mishap to the mission aircraft or some serious inadvertent disclosure may arouse public interest and reaction to the degree that some form of official statement or explanation will become necessary. Each incident will be evaluated by pre-designated CIA and DOD personnel who will determine, and recommend to the Project Director, and to the Under Secretary of the Air Force an appropriate reaction. The sole spokesman for public release of information will be the Under Secretary of the Air Force.

Incidents arising, such as press inquiries or "educated" speculative articles appearing in or reported by the various news

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media, will not in themselves be sufficient cause for public responses. Inquiries directed to contractors or Government agencies including their personnel, will not be answered with other than a statement that this is a classified government project. If pressed further, an immediate request for guidance will be made to the C.I.A. Project OXCART Headquarters. All such inquiries will be reported to Project Headquarters in any case.

V. INCIDENTS ON LOCATION

[REDACTED]

If the aircraft has not been identified by unclassified personnel, it will be described as one of the "Century" series and not the mission aircraft.

VI. INCIDENTS OFF LOCATION

See Enclosure #2.

VII. PERTINENT COVER STORIES TO BE DISSEMINATED BY RESPONSIBLE ACTION OFFICES ARE INDICATED BELOW

A. General Press and News Media Inquiries

Cover Story

See Enclosure #1.

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2. Responsible Action Office

Department of Defense (Under Secretary of the Air Force)

3. Coordinating Offices

Central Intelligence Agency (Deputy Director, Research)

Department of Defense (Under Secretary of the Air Force)

B. Incidents

1. Cover Story

See Paragraphs V and VI above.

2. Responsible Action Office

Same as VII-A-2 above.

3. Coordinating Offices

Same as VII-A-3 above.

VIII. The following named individuals are being furnished a copy of this document for purposes of internal coordination with cleared personnel within their respective departments. It is requested that a record be maintained of personnel who have been so briefed.

Dr. Joseph V. Charyk

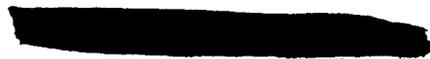
- Department of Defense

Dr. Hugh Dryden

- National Aeronautics
and Space Agency

Mr. Najeeb Halaby

- Federal Aviation
Administration



- Central Intelligence Agency

Gen. Maxwell Taylor

- Military Representative of
the President

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IX. The Central Intelligence Agency will notify each Agency of any change to this plan and in turn requests that any suggested alterations be coordinated with C.I.A. for concurrence prior to implementation.

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Attachment
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Enclosure #1
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PRESS RESPONSE WITHOUT INCIDENT (To be released only by the Under Secretary of the Air Force)

Within the past year, the Department of Defense has initiated a program directed toward improving methods of protecting sensitive information. Where practical, the Department has kept secure details as to missile firings, prohibited closeup photography of our missiles, space vehicles and supporting facilities, and has not announced when important system tests are being held. The primary purpose has been to avoid giving progress details on defense systems development which, under previous procedures, made such information available to foreign intelligence agents; permitting them to make detailed weapon system analyses.

Accordingly, current policy precludes release of any information about the present project other than that it is a classified, advanced research and development program under Department of Defense sponsorship with the Department of the Air Force exercising supervision of control and test operations.

FALL BACK POSITION

If news media pressures are of sufficient magnitude to warrant and if it is the determination of C.I.A. and D.O.B. reviewing authorities that circumstances make it desirable, a fall-back position can be taken which would include the additional disclosure that it is a vehicle which is related to the development of a satellite launch system.

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Attachment
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PRESS RESPONSE TO MIDEAP (UNCLASSIFIED)

The vehicle which (crashed) (made a forced landing at _____) on (_____) was an experimental prototype being used in a Department of Defense research program. The vehicle was on a routine test flight at the time.

The research and flight test operations are being conducted under the supervision and control of the United States Air Force [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Details concerning test objectives and vehicle specifications are classified.

[REDACTED]

FALL BACK POSITION

It is anticipated that only the most extreme circumstances would require a release of information in excess of the above statement. But, if necessary, any additional release should be in the direction of the normal, controlled cover story. Therefore, any release beyond the above would be the primary PRESS RESPONSE WITHOUT INCIDENT (Enclosure #1) followed--again, if completely unavoidable--by its own FALL BACK POSITION statement.