

3 June 1960

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NOTES ON OXCART

In the light of the U-2 incident of 1 May and subsequent developments growing out of that incident, some thought may be given to Project Oxcart. The following are certain factors of that project that may be relevant to any review at this time.

1. The Oxcart vehicle will not make its first flight until May 1961. Considerable flight testing will be required and there is little likelihood that it will be ready for operational use until the spring of 1962. Until that time, no policy considerations with respect to the employment of the vehicle will arise.

2. The vehicle in question will operate from a base in the [redacted] It may be desirable to stage operations through [redacted] base. No use of other bases in [redacted] is contemplated. Since the vehicle will typically approach target areas [redacted]



1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

3. Excellent progress is being made for the goal of [redacted] This factor, together with mach 3.2 speed, is counted on to provide a degree of invulnerability to interception greater than the U-2 enjoyed when it first became operational.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

4. [redacted]

5. Although the program is being carried forward with urgency, it does not involve significant amounts of overtime or other sizeable costs incurred in order to permit earlier delivery date. In other words there

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

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is little saving to be made in the over-all cost of the program by stretching it out over time. Even if it seemed likely that operational use would be delayed beyond the spring of 1962 by policy considerations, it would be desirable to achieve the earliest feasible first flight so as to allow the maximum opportunity for the flight testing and check out of the vehicle and its sub-systems. Basically, of course, the reason for urgency is the desire to have a capability in hand at the earliest practicable date whatever the ultimate use of the capability.



6. Funding for FY-1961 is completely arranged within existing budgets. [REDACTED]

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)

7. The major precaution that would seem to be called for under present circumstances is the strictest possible security to conceal the fact that this program is in progress. To that end, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Whether or not this particular step is taken, all witting individuals are being reminded of their security obligations.

1.5(c)
3.4(b)(1)