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2 August 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief of Naval Operations

SUBJECT : Project AQUATONE

REFERENCE : Memorandum to Director of Central Intelligence from Chief of Naval Operations, dated 31 July 57, same subject. (Op-553c/mgt, Ser 003P553C)

1. The Chief of Naval Operations' memorandum on AQUATONE has been carefully considered by this Agency. It describes accurately the course of discussions that have been held between the Navy and the Central Intelligence Agency during the last few months. It is gratifying that equipment that has been developed for AQUATONE gives promise of being useful to the Navy. The memorandum confirms our understanding of the Navy's desire to participate operationally in the program and of the terms on which such participation might take place.

2. Since the discussions in April 1957 referred to in the referenced memorandum, the value to AQUATONE of a carrier-based U-2 capability has been reappraised, taking into account relevant political developments in the intervening months. It is the present judgment of this Agency (a) that a carrier-based capability would add little to the coverage of the Soviet Bloc obtainable by AQUATONE from the land bases to which it now has access, (b) that the availability of alternate land bases provides a fair degree of insurance against the political risk of eviction, but (c) that carrier operations, by reason of their flexibility and independence of foreign jurisdiction, would generally enhance the reconnaissance capability of the United States, especially with respect to areas outside of the Soviet Bloc. Accordingly, although the benefit to AQUATONE would be too limited to justify

TOP SECRET

TS-164296
Copy 8 of 9

TOP SECRET

the expenditure of Project funds for the conversion of aircraft, this Agency would be happy to see this additional capability in hand. These views have, of course, been made known to the Navy in recent conversations.

3. A decision to convert existing U-2 aircraft for this purpose can be made only with the concurrence of the Air Force. Not only has the Air Force been a full partner in AQUATONE since its inception but a clear understanding has existed that the aircraft and other equipment utilized in the Project would be turned over to the Air Force when no longer needed for this purpose. Accordingly, there must be set against the advantages of a carrier-based operation its cost in terms of a correspondingly reduced land-based capability.

4. This Agency is not in a good position to weigh the relative merits of these alternative uses of the equipment in question. It is believed that the main responsibility for so doing should rest with the two Services themselves. It is suggested that the Navy approach the Air Force directly and seek a resolution of the issue. This Agency will be glad to join in any discussions that may be held for this purpose and is prepared to support whichever decision is arrived at. It should be noted that, unless the manufacturer receives in the immediate future instructions to proceed with the conversions, jigs will be torn down, his Bakersfield facility closed, and the conversion will become infeasible within any reasonable time limits. Time is, therefore, of the essence.

5. This Agency has kept the Air Force, in its capacity as a partner in AQUATONE, informed at all times of discussions with the Navy on the matters discussed in this correspondence. In order to facilitate a prompt decision, a copy of this memorandum together with a copy of the referenced memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations is being forwarded to the Chief of Staff, United States Air Force.

SIGNED

G. P. GABELL
Lieutenant General, USAF
Acting Director

CONCUR AUG 2 1957
(sgd) Richard M. Bissell, Jr.
Project Director

cc: Chief of Staff, USAF
(w/cy 2 of SAPC-18095)

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RMB:gjg

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COPY 8 of 9