27 February 1964

dlife

PID IB 265/63

30 September 1963
Copy 4 of 8

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Manufacturing and Services Division, ORR

25X1 ATTENTION : [redacted]

SUBJECT : Chief, Requirements Branch, Reconnaissance Group, CGS

SUBJECT : Chief, CIA/PID (NPIC)

SUBJECT : Gartok-Kashgar Road Study

REFERENCES : (a) Requirement No. ORR/302/62
(b) Project No. C 300/63

1. This memorandum is in response to the referenced requirement requesting analysis and graphics of:

a. Alignment and surface condition of the road from Gartok (31 45N - 80 22E) to Kashgar (39 29N - 75 58E) and any roads to the border from this route.

b. Detail concerning any roads in the area which appear to be under construction or recently completed.

c. Describe any roads leading from China into India.

2. The following list of photographic missions contains most of the basic material from which this study was extracted:

25X1

a. [redacted]
b.
c.

3. All major roads are described in detail in the following text. Roads which are of secondary importance as supply routes, are plotted on the map and the map legend will give all available details on their condition. Any attempt to use the information presented in the text or on the map as the basis for determining the capacity of these roads as supply routes must be based on a consideration of the terrain features as well as the condition of the road. Roads in the area under study generally become improved when they traverse difficult terrain only. Many of the unimproved roads traverse high level plateaus, stream valleys and intermountain basins are relatively level and contain well drained compacted sand and gravel. Such roads, although unimproved, must be considered good supply routes.

SUBJECT: Gartok-Kashgar Road Study

4. To facilitate handling, the Gartok-Kashgar Road has been divided into four sections as follows:

a. Gartok-Gar Dzong

This section of the road generally follows the Tsangpo (River) valley. The road is single lane improved with few heavy grades or sharp curves encountered.

b. Gar Dzong-Rudog

Northwestward from Gar Dzong this single lane improved road follows the east bank of the Gartang (River) to Rachak Naru (32 32N - 79 45E). Here the line turns eastward along the Indus River to Ralajung (32 33N - 79 53E). The road then crosses the Indus by means of a narrow bridge and continues north through mountainous terrain, traversing river valleys and passing through rugged terrain with no major difficulty. Beyond Churkang (32 54N - 79 47E) the road crosses flat alluvial plains to a point approximately three miles east of Rudog. The main road does not serve Rudog; however, a single lane improved road, proceeding westward from the main road over flat alluvial plains, passes through Rudog on its way to Chushul, (33 38N - 78 38E).

c. Rudog - Yeh-cheng (37 53N - 77 24E)

The road skirts the south shore of Nyak tsho (Lake) over flat alluvial plains before encountering nearly 100 miles of very mountainous terrain. The road generally follows river valleys through the mountains; however, a low divide must be crossed at approximately 33 35N - 80 14E. A great deal of snow is encountered over much of this section in the winter months and must be considered an operational difficulty which would be difficult to overcome. Beginning at approximately 34 27N - 80 25E the road enters a flat alluvial plain over which it travels to approximately 35 53N - 79 25E. It should be noted that this section of the road is almost entirely within Kashmir. Northwestward the road encounters mountainous terrain for approximately 250 miles. The road passes through this long stretch of very difficult terrain traversing small stream valleys, with the exception of a few stretches where it crosses a divide. The most difficult section is located at approximately 37 02N - 76 57E. It should be noted that the road again passes through Kashmir territory. At approximately 37 25N - 77 15E the road descends into a basin. From this point to Yeh-cheng the road is unimproved but would make a good supply route, as it has no steep grades or sharp curves.

SUBJECT: Gartok-Kashgar Road Study

d. Yeh-cheng to Kashgar

This section of the road, crossing a broad flat basin, with few steep grades or sharp curves encountered, traverses a section of intensely cultivated territory with numerous good roads serving this fertile and populated region. This section of the road is two-lane and is well maintained.

5. Important roads branching from the Gartok-Kashgar Road are as follows:

a. Indus River to Chushul

This road branches from the Gartok-Kashgar Road at the south bank of the Indus River at 32 28N - 79 45E and crosses the river by means of a narrow bridge. The capacity of this bridge appears to be very limited. The road continues northwestward along the east bank of the Indus River at 32 32N - 79 39E, where the river is crossed by means of another narrow bridge with low carrying capacity. The road turns northwestward along the west bank of the Indus over relatively level terrain to Chushul. The roadbed is definitely improved, and, in spite of the fact that it is narrow, it would make a good supply route primarily because the route is relatively level and because the road is laid over well drained alluvial soil.

b. A road branched from the Gartok-Kashgar road at approximately 36 27N - 77 59E and proceeds eastward in the Yarkand River Valley to approximately 36 33N - 76 07E. Here road improvement appears to end; however, obliquity and clouds preclude a definitive statement of this point. This road was under construction between 1961 and 1962. [redacted] 25X1
25X1 [redacted] show that the last section of the road, which was a pack animal trail in 1961, appeared as an improved, single-lane road in 1962.

6. Secondary roads are plotted on the map CIA/PID/IB-P-583/63 and their condition can be ascertained from the map legend.

Maintenance on the roads on the broad flat plains or basins should require a minimum of maintenance. However, roads following river valleys with many small tributary streams flowing into the valley, would normally require maintenance each spring. At the point where these tributaries flow into the valley floor, alluvial fans are formed by the running water. These seasonal tributary streams go dry during the late summer. The spring thaws precipitates water into these valleys and new stream beds are formed. These new stream beds can result in sections of the roadbed being washed away.

[redacted] 25X1

SUBJECT: Gartok-Kashgar Road Study

7. The photo analysts assigned to this project were [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] should you have further questions concerning this project. This completed the refereuced requirement.

[redacted] 25X1

ENCLOSURE:
1 Annotated Map (CIA/PID/IB-P-583/63)