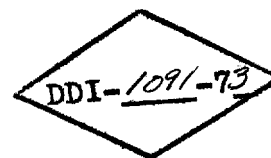


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[Redacted] NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



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13 April 1973

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs

Deputy Secretary of Defense

Under Secretary of State for  
Political Affairs

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: "H" Camera Photography of North Vietnam

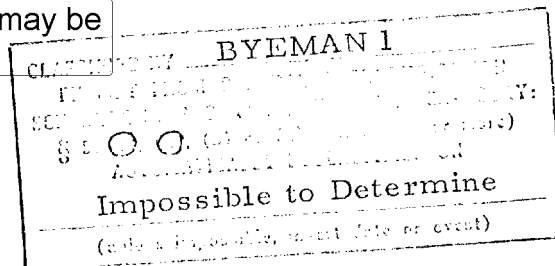
1. The attached document is a proposal to use an IDEALIST U-2R to obtain standoff photography of coastal North Vietnam.

2. Higher authority approved a request of the Washington Special Action Group, Working Group C, to test the capability of the "H" camera to obtain high resolution photography of North Vietnam. Subsequently, this mission was accomplished by a U-2 [Redacted]. However, the haze and cloud conditions encountered during this transitional weather period, combined with some anomalies in the film processing, produced less than optimum results. The feasibility of operating [Redacted] was demonstrated as well as the capability of the "H" camera to obtain coverage of significant portions of the North Vietnamese coastal areas.

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NSC review completed - unredacted segments may be declassified



NRO review(s) completed.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

3. It is felt that two additional flights should be flown with better weather conditions to provide a realistic and valid test of the capability of the "H" camera to obtain standoff photography of North Vietnam.

4. It is requested that the 40 Committee approve two flights to verify the capability of the "H" camera for this application.

[Redacted]

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NRO

*John L. McLucas*

Attachment - 1  
Proposal Book

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Distribution:

- 1 - Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- 2 - Deputy Secretary of Defense
- 3 - Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
- 4 - Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
- 5 - Director of Central Intelligence [Redacted]
- 6 - Executive Secretary, 40 Committee
- 7 - Director, National Reconnaissance Office
- 8 - Joint Reconnaissance Center
- 9 - Deputy Director of Central Intelligence [Redacted]
- 10 - Director, CIA Reconnaissance Programs
- 11 - Deputy Director for Intelligence
- 12 - Asst. to DDCI [Redacted]
- 13 - Special Group Officer, DDO [Redacted]
- 14 - Special Group Officer, DDS&T
- 15 - C/DDI/SRS [Redacted] ?
- 16 - Chairman, COMIREX
- 17 - SAVA (Mr. Carver)
- 18 - FE/China/DDO
- 19 - D/O/OSA
- 20 - SAS/O/OSA
- 21 - INTEL/O/OSA
- 22 - IDEA/O/OSA
- 23 - D/M/OSA
- 24 - RB/OSA

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"H" CAMERA  
PHOTOGRAPHY OF  
NORTH VIETNAM

NSC review completed - unredacted segments may be  
declassified

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I. JUSTIFICATION

The Washington Special Action Group, Working Group C, has directed the development of photographic requirements for Indochina subsequent to the cease fire agreement.

Part of this is a priority requirement for high resolution photography of the North Vietnamese coastal areas. Since overflight of North Vietnam is prohibited, an IDEALIST U-2R with the "H" camera represents a flexible, responsive capability to obtain this coverage.

This mission, to evaluate the capability of the "H" camera system to obtain this photography, has been requested by the WSAG, Working Group C.

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II. OPERATIONAL CONCEPT

[Redacted]

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The aircraft will fly a low altitude departure route similar to normal low flight training missions [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

the aircraft will remain at low altitude and depart the area [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Other techniques are used to reduce visual or radio

detection of the aircraft [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

The photographic flight lines will be planned to provide coverage of North Vietnamese coastal areas [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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III. AIR DEFENSE ANALYSIS

U-2 aircraft operating over the Gulf of Tonkin can expect continuous and accurate radar tracking by North Vietnam and Chinese forces.

The mission aircraft will remain in international airspace and all flights will be planned to avoid the lethal range of known SA-2 missile sites. Inadvertent overflight of an unidentified SAM unit could pose a threat to the aircraft. However, on board defensive systems and tactics are considered adequate to insure survivability.

North Vietnamese MIG-21 aircraft are not considered to be a significant threat to U-2's flying at mission altitude.

[Redacted]

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IV. CLIMATOLOGY

Coastal North Vietnam

A. GENERAL:

The transition period to a southwest monsoon begins in April and becomes southwest by the end of May. Low level winds in early April tend to be unorganized but prevail from the southwest by months end. A more westerly surface trajectory or a weakening of the east wind component tend to decrease coastal cloudiness in late March and April.

B. CLOUDINESS:

Mean cloudiness is near 80 percent in April. As a general rule, cloudiness is greatest near the coast during this month being heaviest north of 19° N. Aircraft flying at high altitudes would be expected to encounter clear to scattered conditions at individual targets on 2 to 5 days north of 19° N, and on 6 to 10 days south of 19° N.

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