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12 December 1969

The Honorable David Packard
Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dave:

I received your letter of 9 December concerning your desire to prepare a plan for consolidating the U-2 aircraft in the Strategic Air Command. As I think we agreed at the last EXCOM meeting, the question whether to continue a CIA U-2 fleet or to consolidate in SAC is an issue which needs an early decision. Should that decision be to consolidate, we will plan to work closely with John McLucas on a consolidation program.

As I understood our discussion at EXCOM, we agreed that this question involved political issues of national interest and was, therefore, appropriate for 303 Committee review from a policy standpoint. Pursuant to that, we are preparing the necessary papers to raise this matter before the Committee at an early date.

I am sure you agree that the question of whether to continue the CIA fleet (i.e. to maintain the reconnaissance flexibility inherent in it) is a subject for policy decision of the White House.

Sincerely,

(Signed)
Richard Helms
Director

cc: Dr. McLucas

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(Drafted Steininger 11/^{Dec}12/69
(Rewritten RH, 12 Dec 69

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Approved For Release 2004/06/29 : CIA-RDP85B00803R000200030004-6

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