

~~TOP SECRET~~



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

(b)(1) 8835-70a

WORKING COPY
4 AUG 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Attorney General

Deputy Secretary of Defense
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

SUBJECT: IDEALIST Program

In December 1969, the President approved continuation of the IDEALIST Program through FY 1971 and directed the 40 Committee to review the project again prior to consideration of the FY 1972 budget. Since budgetary planning for FY 1972 is now underway, I suggest this issue be placed on the Committee agenda in the near future.

The attached memorandum, which has been coordinated with the NRO, summarizes the pertinent facts about the program and the questions that need to be addressed.

Rich
Richard Helms
Director

Attachment:
As Stated

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

IDEALIST
~~TOP SECRET~~

HANDLE VIA (b)(1)1.5c
CONTROL SYSTEM ONLY

Handle via (b)(1)1.5c
Control System

~~TOP SECRET~~
IDEALIST

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

4 AUG 1970

(b)(1)1.5c 8835-70
~~WORKING COPY~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Attorney General

Deputy Secretary of Defense
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: IDEALIST Program

1. In December 1969, the President approved continuation of the IDEALIST Program through FY 1971 and directed the 40 Committee to review the project again prior to consideration of the FY 1972 budget. To assist in this review, information is provided herein on the current status and capabilities of the program.

The IDEALIST Program

2. The CIA IDEALIST Program provides a means of mounting "covert" reconnaissance flights by the improved U-2's in times of crisis (b)(1)1.5g, (b)(1)1.5c The IDEALIST fleet is postured to react rapidly to world-wide contingencies and without attribution to direct U. S. Government sponsorship. (b)(1)1.5c (b)(1)1.5g

3. Present IDEALIST operational assets consist of six U-2R aircraft at two permanent bases. One detachment is at Edwards Air Force Base, California, with four aircraft; (b)(1)1.5d (b)(1)1.5c with two aircraft. All aircraft are maintained in an operationally ready posture. (b)(1)1.5c (b)(1)1.5g, (b)(3)

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

IDEALIST
~~TOP SECRET~~

Handle via (b)(1)1.5c
Control System

Handle via
Control System

(b)(1)1.5c

~~TOP SECRET~~
IDEALIST

(b)(1)1.5c 3835-70
Page 2

(b)(1)1.5c

4. An agreement with the United Kingdom provides for British participation in photographic and SIGINT collection in areas of mutual concern and for the exchange of appropriate information. (b)(1)1.5c

(b)(1)1.5c

5. The following information summarizes the capabilities of specific IDEALIST Program assets:

a. Photographic Systems: (b)(1)1.5c

(b)(1)1.5g

b. Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) Systems: (b)(1)1.5c

(b)(1)1.5g

c. Aircraft Survivability:

(b)(1)1.5g

IDEALIST
~~TOP SECRET~~

Handle via (b)(1)1.5c
Control System

(b)(1)1.5g, (b)(3)

(b)(1)1.5f, (b)(1)1.5c, (b)(3)

(b)(1)1.5g, (b)(1)1.5c, (b)(3)

The Issue

6. The issue before the Committee is whether this quick-reaction and plausibly deniable surveillance system for foreign areas is worth maintaining as an option for those future contingencies (b)(1)1.5c

(b)(1)1.5c

(b)(1)1.5c

In making this judgment, the Committee must take note of the fact that there are

two other systems which are also available for use for any such contingency; namely, the SR-71, and the TAGBOARD drone (the subsonic drone is too vulnerable to be considered a competitor except for very select areas). Although neither the SR-71 or TAGBOARD could be expected to easily survive the (b)(1)1.5c environment, they are clear candidates for use in any area for which the U-2 might be considered. Both have some important capabilities which the U-2 does not have:

a. (b)(1)1.5g
(b)(1)1.5c

b. (b)(1)1.5c
(b)(1)1.5c

On the other hand the U-2 aircraft, whether operated by the CIA or the Air Force, has a unique performance advantage over the TAGBOARD and SR-71:

a. The maneuverability of the U-2 and the characteristics of its sensors gives it an advantage in certain situations, particularly for (b)(1)1.5g. Also, the flexibility of its payload and its ability to be airborne for long periods allows it to perform special missions such as stand-off photography and (b)(1)1.5c collection.

In addition to this performance capability, the CIA managed IDEALIST U-2 provides one additional advantage, namely:

(b)(1)1.5g, (b)(3)

One of the questions before the Committee is whether this unique characteristic is sufficiently important to pay the cost necessary to maintain it.

7. To isolate the various costs involved, the NRO has studied a number of possible combinations of the SAC and CIA fleets, as represented below:

<u>Mode of Operation</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
a. Continue current split fleet operation (fly 12 aircraft, 6 in each fleet)	(b)(1)1.5e, (b)(1)
b. Continue split fleet (b)(1)1.5c (b)(1)1.5c (fly 10, 5 in CIA, 5 in SAC)	(b)(1)1.5e, (b)(1)
c. Consolidate under SAC (fly 10)	(b)(1)1.5e, (b)(1)
d. Consolidate under CIA (fly 10)	(b)(1)1.5e, (b)(1)
e. Consolidate under SAC (fly 7)	(b)(1)1.5e, (b)(1)
f. Consolidate under CIA (fly 7)	(b)(1)1.5e, (b)(1)

Thus, if one is willing to accept a lower mission capability, it is possible to reduce the number of aircraft and combine the fleets under one operator. Comparing the various combination-reductions shows that whatever the total number of aircraft deemed necessary to preserve the ready availability of U-2 performance advantages, the cost associated with maintaining the special characteristics derived from CIA management is (b)(1)1.5e per year, depending on the mode of operation chosen.

(b)(1)1.5c, (b)(3)

9. In summary, then, the specific questions that need to be addressed are these:

- a. What is the likelihood that the IDEALIST U-2's will be used for contingency reconnaissance, overflight or peripheral, in the foreseeable future?

Handle via (b)(1)1.5c
Control System

~~TOP SECRET~~
IDEALIST

(b)(1)1. 8835-70
Page 6

- b. Is this probability of use sufficiently high to justify the cost of (b)(1)1.5e that is required to keep the IDEALIST capabilities available?
- c. If the answer to the second question is negative, does the current routine offshore coverage of (b)(1)1.5c alone justify the retention of (b)(1)1.5c IDEALIST operations?
- d. If the answers to the second and third questions are negative, then what is the appropriate pace and procedure for disengaging from our present arrangements with (b)(1)1.5c?
- e. If the answer to either the second or the third question is affirmative, is it essential for the CIA to continue the program or could SAC plan to maintain a world-wide contingency readiness using foreign bases and pilots and manage the (b)(1)1.5c operation?

CARL E. DUCKETT
Director, CIA Reconnaissance Programs

Handle via (b)(1)1.5c
Control System

IDEALIST
~~TOP SECRET~~