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2 August 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, TACANA TCT

FROM : [redacted]
SE/COPS

SUBJECT : System Development

1. Whereas recent flight tests in Oklahoma showed that an A-B-C pattern can be flown under overt conditions, TACANA is a long way from being a clandestinely deployable collection system. As an operations element SE cannot judge whether there is solid scientific basis for continued development of such a collection system. However, we offer the following comments as an approach to that question.

2. A requirements/target study should be made of installations in the Leningrad and Moscow areas which could be covered by TACANA. These must be high priority, not accessible by other means, and geographically suitable for a TACANA capability. Once catalogued these targets should be evaluated carefully against projected TACANA capability. We assume TACANA might photograph targets in two ways: flying directly to a distinctive target which they locate due to its unique shape, size, etc; flying an A-B route which passes over targets of interest which are photographed while in flight (birds do not recognize any specific target).

3. A description or TOD of the desired clandestine TACANA collection system should be written. This requirement must emphasize the conditions under which it would be deployed to and in the USSR.

4. Using the two above papers the DD/S&T should prepare a proposed research-development plan with estimated costs and timetable. This would be used to decide whether to spend more money and effort on TACANA.

WARNING NOTICE -- SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

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5. Observations of TACANA over the past eight months do not make us as laymen optimistic that a clandestine collection system can be developed. However, a more systematic scientific/zoological study approach seems essential before embarking on any expensive development. One final note concerns the TACANA camera system. This appears to have excellent capability; indeed, it far exceeds delivery capability. Thus, we suggest further engineering on it might be deferred pending decision on the aviary capability.

cc: NIO/SA
C/SE/USSR

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