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28 August 1957

AQUATONE BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
RE GUIDED MISSILES, ATOMIC ENERGY, AND LONG RANGE BOMBERS

Gentlemen,

We propose to define for you the unique role which AQUATONE-type photography plays in the production of National Intelligence estimates, which provide the basis for important decisions affecting the National Security. All of the principal objectives we will discuss fall into those strengths that have been determined by the National Intelligence Community to be the most significant in the Soviet ability to strike at the United States.

These are: The Soviet guided missile system, the Soviet nuclear weapons production program, and the Soviet long-range bomber force.

Our present intelligence on all of these critical Soviet capabilities still contains major areas of uncertainties. A significant quantity of our existing information on these strengths is fragmentary, and, consequently, our present estimates, in some cases, admit to significant margins of possible error.

US defense plans, and budgets to support them, involve vast sums of money and allocation of effort, and, admittedly, are at present based on information having these margins of possible error. Accordingly, such plans and budgets can be materially affected by reducing these margins. And we feel that in the AQUATONE system we have an important tool in reducing these possible errors.

25X1D

In the critical field of Soviet guided missile development, we find some of our major intelligence gaps. [redacted]

25X1D
25X1D

[redacted] We have never seen a Soviet ballistic missile. We have had only limited information regarding launching pads, erection and handling equipment, guidance installations and equipment, test stands,

NSA review(s) completed.

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[redacted]

fuel storage, and other associated launching devices. Data on these items are essential for a firm statement as to the size, type, and pay load of missiles, guidance systems, and types of engines used for propulsion. This type of information is vital for the production of estimates of present and potential Soviet missile capabilities.

During AQUATONE operations in [redacted] two small probable missile facilities were photographed, but it was not until about two weeks ago that we had actually seen a major physical facility supporting the USSR ballistic missile test program. 25X1D

25X1B

Now, at TYURA TAM, we have photographed and can study in detail a relatively new rangehead still under construction. [redacted] There is, however, considerable information on the rangehead support elements. The TYURA TAM photography is the first visual evidence of a facility bearing on the Soviet ICBM test program. A complete, unobscured coverage could have given indications not only of the status of the program but possibly the timing--a critical element in the guided missile estimates, and--at the moment--would be particularly useful in an evaluation of current Soviet claims on ICBM progress. We intend to go back as soon as operationally feasible to clarify the launching site at TYURA TAM.

25X2

[redacted]--which we stumbled on in a [redacted] mission--has us baffled at the moment. We cannot say conclusively that it is associated with the atomic energy or the guided missiles program. A canvass of outstanding engineers in both these fields has failed to resolve this question. Additional photographic coverage now or in the near future may allow us to find the answer. If it is associated with the guided missile program, it could make vital differences in our estimates of the Soviet missile program. 25X1 25X2

[redacted]

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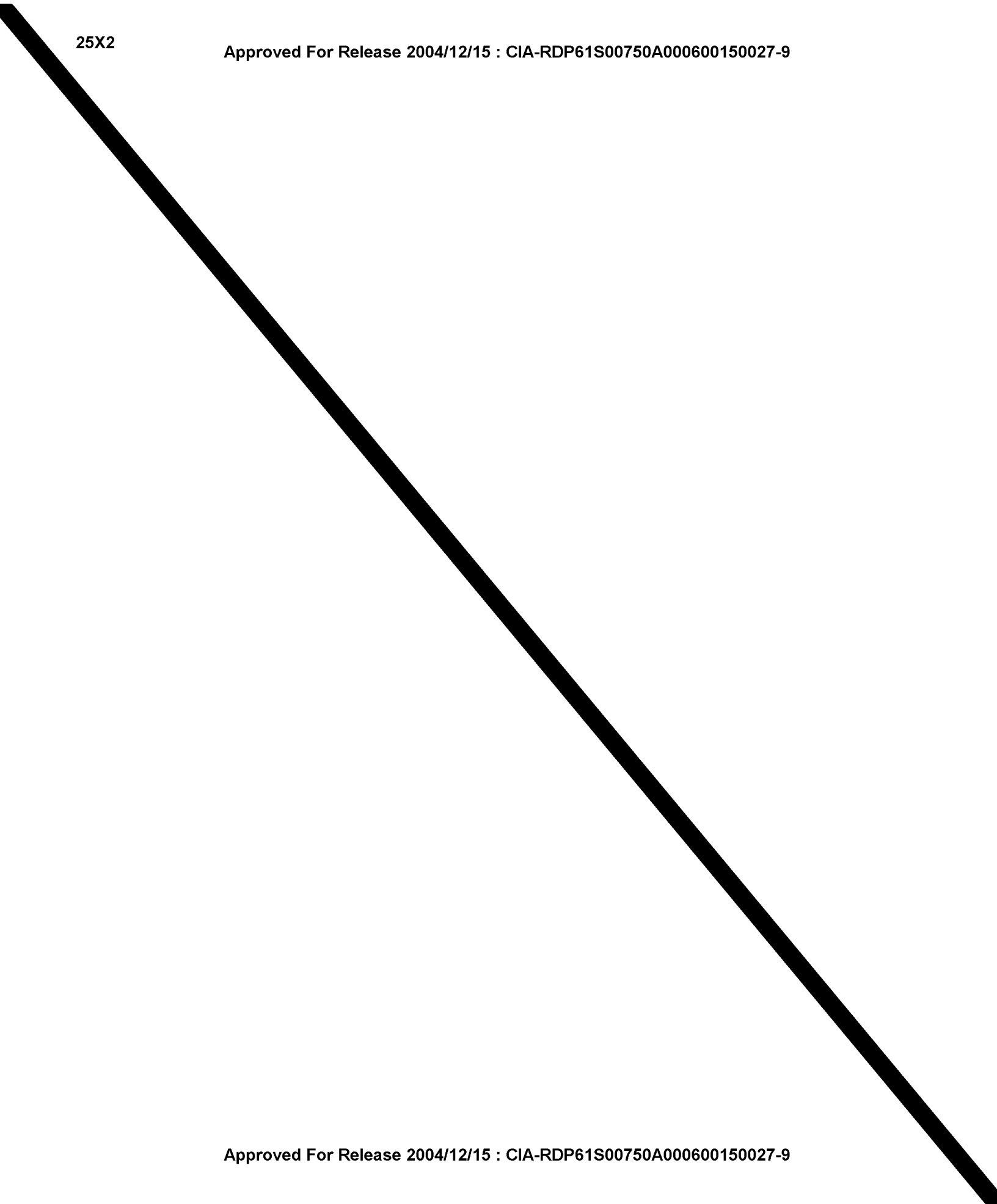

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25X2 [redacted]

Our principal estimative problems with regard to the Soviet long-range bomber force relate to its capabilities for attack on the US, in numbers and types of delivery vehicles available to the force as well as the availability of nuclear weapons of various types. 25X1 [redacted] there are significant gaps which we believe could be narrowed by additional photographic coverage. Photography of MOSCOW/FILI, the only known producer of BISON jet heavy bombers, has enabled us to determine more precisely the production capacity of the plant. 25X1 Similar photography of the aircraft factories at VORONEZH, KUYBYSHEV, KAZAN, and IRKUTSK [redacted] would enable us to measure their actual and potential production capabilities with a degree of precision not now possible.

Our knowledge of the true stature of the Soviet heavy bomber force has been limited not only by lack of precise information on production facilities but equally by the lack of first hand observation of the home bases of this force.

25X1D [redacted]

Valuable intelligence by-products also can be anticipated as a result of the coverage of the primary systems we have discussed. Route photography can be expected to yield significant details of other Soviet air installations, transportation systems, industrial facilities, and other economic and military targets which could be of a significance only slightly less than the information we anticipate on primary objectives. One of the outstanding bonus effects that we know will be derived by future exercise

of the AQUATONE capability will be an increase in our knowledge of Soviet air defense capabilities.

25X1D [redacted]

And it also must be noted that the exercise of the AQUATONE capability over otherwise largely inaccessible areas of the Soviet Union could reveal installations and activities of a completely unknown but highly significant nature. In the TASHKENT area of the Soviet Union, close to the Afghan border where we had previously known only of the deployment of Soviet tactical aircraft, photography has revealed an airstrip of approximately 15,000 feet in length is under construction. The establishment of such a facility in an area not normally considered to be the site of long-range air force operations opens up a new region of research into possible Soviet plans for employment of its long-range aircraft. As a specific by-product, AQUATONE photography yields terrain information from which accurate radar navigation and bombing charts can be construed.