

SC-05430/59

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

8 September 1959

SUBJECT: Recommendations of Ad Hoc Requirements Committee for Use of
TALENT to Determine the Status of the Soviet ICBM Threat

1. The concern of the US Government regarding the threat posed by the Soviet ICBM was the prime motive which culminated in Mission [REDACTED]. The three hypotheses which were tested, together with the results of exploitation to date, are as follows:

a. That the USSR is currently deploying ICBMs and that the Ural rail network constitutes one of the most likely areas for such deployment.

Comment: We have concluded that ICBM sites probably are not located on the one-fourth portion of the rail network covered by usable photography. However, inasmuch as the major part of the network was not covered, we continue to regard the Urals area as likely for ICBM deployment.

b. That plans for deployment would be revealed by new installations, training areas, or other activity developed at Tyura Tam since the 1957 TALENT coverage.

Comment: While photography of the area discloses a great deal of information pertinent to the Soviet missile research and development program, it has not provided any evidence of the mode, location or extent of ICBM deployment.

c. That evidence concerning the suspected ICBM aerial production facility at Sverdlovsk would provide some indication of the size and pace of the ICBM program.

Comment: Such a facility has not yet been identified in photography.

2. With the above considerations in mind, the ARC, in pursuance of the USIB conclusion that the nature and extent of Soviet ICBM deployment is the most critical intelligence objective, has carefully re-examined this problem in terms of both TALENT capabilities and those of all other sources as well. It has concluded that TALENT photography continues to offer the only possibility at this time and within an adequate time period for resolving this problem and that other sources offer little, if any, prospect.

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3. Consequently, the ARC recommends (the Navy dissent is set forth separately as Tab B) that a systematic aerial reconnaissance search of selected areas of the USSR be initiated to determine whether there now exists or will soon exist a Soviet operational ICBM capability of major strategic significance. We believe that this judgment can be made only by obtaining reliable evidence on the magnitude and pace of the Soviet ICBM deployment program as reflected by the number and type of launching sites already completed or in preparation. Inasmuch as the number and type of sites are of utmost importance in making this judgment, we believe that the most effective use of the TALENT asset requires an extension of the search concept recently employed in the Ural mission. Accordingly, it is proposed that the several most likely deployment areas in the USSR be systematically covered, in order of their probability by TALENT missions which are recognized as search missions and that the search be continued until positive results are achieved or sufficient coverage is obtained to establish that no major ICBM deployment program exists. Provided the search program is carried out within a relatively short period of time (preferably not more than one year), we believe that it may enable US intelligence to ascertain with a high degree of assurance the status of Soviet operational ICBM capabilities. Tab A with an Annex and an illustrative map sets forth in detail the rationale for our recommended search program. It is important to note that a significant number of the highest priority targets would be covered by the foregoing.

4. Admittedly, a high confidence answer to the nature and extent of the threat from ICBM deployment could not be achieved by only partial coverage of the regions proposed. However, coverage of certain key areas may disclose one or more ICBM sites, thus achieving a partial answer on the operational status of the Soviet missile system and may well provide positive evidence of the mode of deployment as well as valuable information on their missile capabilities. This information would directly affect our national estimates and might also affect our further planning for the use of TALENT, as well as other sources. On the other hand, faced with repeated negative findings, we might begin to suspect that no large scale ICBM deployment program is in being. We might, therefore, wish to propose further search in order to establish this suspicion with greater confidence. The most important areas which may contribute to a partial answer on the threat from ICBM deployment are set forth below.

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6. For information there is attached as the TALENT list of USSR
Targets for Highest Priority coverage as agreed by the ARC



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DD/P (cy 1)

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[redacted]

DD/I(P) TCO (cy 10)

OCI TCO (cy 11)

OSI TCO (cy 12)

ORR TCO (cy 13)

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[redacted]

Director PIC (cy 15)

CIA TSO (cy 16)

SO/Admin Br/DPD-DD/P (cy 17)

DD/P TCO (cy 18)

C/DMD/PIC (cy 19)

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