

2 August 1965

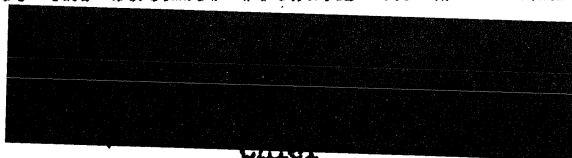
MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, NPIC
THROUGH : Chief, IAD/CIA
SUBJECT : Estimation of Acreages and Yields of Agricultural Crops and from Overhead Photography

1. One of the major intelligence problems relating to agriculture in Communist countries is an evaluation of crop prospects and annual production achievements for the major crops. At the present time our estimates are based primarily on such sources as current weather information, press reports for Communist countries, and, where possible, observations by US Embassy officials and other travelers. In the case of the USSR much that appears in print about crop yields is exaggerated, while for Communist China very little information is reported in the news, or is available from other sources.

2. The crop yields of the USSR and Communist China not only play a large part in their internal economies, but determine to a large degree how much assistance these countries can give to the smaller nations which they are attempting to convert to Communism. We believe, therefore, that for a number of years it will be important to know how successful these and possibly other countries are in meeting their goals in agriculture.

3. Preliminary conversations with experts in the field of aerial photography suggest that, given adequate R&D support, there may be a good potential for (a) developing new photographic techniques that would be useful in estimating crop types, acreages, and yields; and (b) developing automatic scanning procedures that would be necessary to make the whole program feasible for agriculture, where large areas must be covered or at least sampled.

4. Since we do not know what it might cost or how long it would take to develop the necessary techniques and equipment, we would like for NPIC to explore the matter further and to advise us of your findings. We would not want large sums of money committed, however, until we could give further consideration to the balance between the need and the effort.



Chief
DD/I Collection Guidance Staff

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