

18 MAY 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR Director, (S) NRO Program B

In response to your recent query relative to the elimination of the [redacted] Program in SSD and the establishment of the [redacted] Program in [redacted] I would like to take this opportunity to summarize my decisions and actions to date with regard to certain changes which I determined to be appropriate for the CORONA Program.

As you will recall, the CORONA Program began under the cover of the overt Air Force Discoverer Program. This basic cover consisted of a series of experiments and developments which have long since been realized. The basic mission of CORONA was conceived as a high risk, short term, early reconnaissance capability. In my view, I find the fact that some 5 1/2 years, 80 + launches, and 60 orbiting satellites later, the old Discoverer [redacted] Program management arrangements within the Air Force are outmoded and due for a complete overhaul.

The reasons for this can be summarized as follows. The [redacted] Program office was located organizationally in a position subject to intrusion by many well-meaning but unwitting personnel. From a management viewpoint, the situation had several disadvantages, as this office appeared to be responsive to the AFSC/SSD chain of command, while in fact its primary mission was being conducted in response to NRO requirements.

It therefore seemed reasonable and a matter of some urgency to correct these self-imposed constraints by bringing the [redacted] Program to a conclusion, and initiating a new program within [redacted]. This change has been substantially a mechanical and straightforward alteration. Considerable effort and care have been given to avoiding a compromise of the security objectives by making this change. I would like to emphasize the point that this change was purely an alteration within the Air Force

CORONA

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area of responsibility on the overt side, with the very simple objective of providing a more responsive system with clear lines of authority and responsibility. As of now the [redacted] Program has been concluded and the [redacted] Program established under [redacted] in [redacted]

In viewing the total problem, I feel that further changes are in order, the purpose of which will be to increase the technical competence which can be concentrated on the program.

With this thought in mind, I have authorized [redacted] to introduce the [redacted] into the [redacted] Program by establishing a System Engineering Office in [redacted] to support the Air Force [redacted] Program Office. Under the terms of the arrangements which were initially reached with Mr. Bissell for the technical management of this effort, an understanding was reached on 29 April 1961 for the Air Force to assume system engineering responsibilities for the entire program. In June of 1961, [redacted] negotiated a System Engineering Technical Directive contract with the principal contractor. This original contract subsequently has been superseded by the current contract which [redacted] has assigned for administration to [redacted] the CIA contracting officer attached to [redacted]

The basic statement of responsibility for system engineering and technical direction as extracted from the current SE contract reads:

"Management of the program is the joint responsibility of several agencies of the Government. In the interest of effective management, however, technical direction will be provided by the [redacted] through [redacted] Program office of the Air Force Space Systems Division, acting as the agent for all interested agencies of the government. The [redacted] Program office established in SSD will be the single day by day point of contact for the contractor."

In addition to this generalized statement, Special Procedure S-279, entitled, Operating Procedure for Systems Engineering and Technical Direction, dated 10 June 1963, is incorporated by reference in the SE contract and Part I reads as follows:

"Air Force Space Systems Division (AFSSD) has the responsibility for Systems Engineering and Technical Direction (SETD) for the program and has contracted with LMSC to perform the Systems Engineering functions."

This same relationship and assignment of responsibilities is described in the applicable portions of contracts for the associate contractors in this program.

[redacted] is being brought into the program to support [redacted] in the exercise of this technical direction. The duties and responsibilities of [redacted] are summarized as follows:

- a. System analysis
- b. System interface definitions
- c. Analyses of compromises
- d. Analyses of subsystem performance
- e. Supervision of system and subsystem tests through review of test plans, procedures and results.
- f. Analysis of technical problem areas
- g. Technical support for operations
- h. Assistance in system documentation

In view of the many difficulties that we have experienced in this program, I have determined that it is mandatory to increase the on-site supervision of the technical, engineering, and quality control effort taking place at the AP facility. I have authorized [redacted] to establish two highly qualified representatives to assist in the performance of these functions. This in no way is intended to nor will it interfere with the responsibilities presently exercised there by the CIA. It is only to assist [redacted] in the discharge of his responsibilities for technical direction.

Signed
Brockway McMillan
Director
(S) National Reconnaissance Office

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