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12 August 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion at the NRO Executive Meeting. Attended by McCone, Vance, Fubini and McMillan

Note: This is the first of weekly meetings to be held each Tuesday morning at 11:00 a. m., unless matters of overriding priority intervene.

McCone displayed an organizational chart of DD/S&T and reviewed in detail the distribution of personnel to the several offices indicated on the chart (copy attached), number of people on board, the slots approved, and the results of our recruitment program. I referred to the March 8, 1963, Directive of the President's Board and that what was done was accelerated because of those recommendations, although the course of action had been decided upon by me shortly after I took office as DCI. I emphasized that a strong technical staff in CIA was essential in the interest of the government and that we could not expect it to live unless it was given the elbow room in which to work.

I emphasized again and again that there was absolutely no intention of creating in CIA technical assets to conceive, manage or direct booster operations involved in reconnaissance programs and that the allegations of Dr. Fubini that our purpose was to "create another NASA" were entirely unfounded and I would like to have him withdraw them.

McMillan said he was under the impression we were creating an organization to manage systems engineering in outer space activities and he questions whether we should recruit a large number of people with this in mind. I said this was simply not true and that what was authorized for CIA was to create a sufficient technical organization to conceive new and imaginary programs in fields of interest and to supervise and manage programs assigned to CIA, most of which would be the product of the imaginative thinking of this organization. CIA would as a matter of policy utilize to the fullest practical extent engineers, contractors, manufacturers and other scientific groups who could actually do the work under CIA's supervision.

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The discussion brought out a number of statements by all of those present, indicating that they had been given the impression by Dr. Wheelon that the objectives of DD/S&T were far more expansive than the definition outlined by me above. I said that my definition as expressed above was CIA policy and was clearly understood by Dr. Wheelon, and I had never heard Wheelon express any other intention. I felt certain people had built a "mountain out of a molehill" and I felt that it should be stopped and the impression corrected. The discussion was conclusive on the point.

During the conversation I made the point that in my opinion Dr. Wheelon was a man of exceptional ability, that in building up the organization I had outlined he had recruited 49 capable technical people, of which 15 were Ph. D's and most of the others at least M. A. 's and as a result of this work, CIA had a capability for imaginative, constructive, forward-thinking and technical analysis of the intelligence input derived from scientific and technical resources. I said that this recruitment would continue until the organization was adequately staffed. I was not sure how many people [redacted] wanted as it was dependent upon the number of projects which would come under his control and that I was not sure that FMSAC would build to 105 but in all probability the ultimate organization would approach this number. Fubini brought up the question of the necessity of controlling subsequent procurement and production and I said this was absolutely necessary if we were to benefit from the growth of a system which could result from the continued interest of those who created the system. I gave the U-2 and CORONA growth as examples.

With respect to [redacted] McMillan briefly reviewed the results of the Land Panel's report which paralleled information given me by Dr. Wheelon. They admitted there were problems but that they were not as severe as those of [redacted] and that the program should go forward with efforts being made to solve the essential problems, the most critical ones being associated with the aspherical and flat mirrors. McMillan reported that he planned to go somewhat slower than the program envisaged a month ago. That certain elements of the original [redacted] program had been eliminated. [redacted] was now negotiating a new arrangement with [redacted] and that it will take a month to conclude this arrangement. In any event he said the FY '65 appropriations were sufficient to cover any anticipated work in this year and that money would be released progressively and reported to the group from time to time and that prior to October 1, planning and estimating would have advanced to a point where the FY '66 budget could be agreed upon. This procedure was unanimously accepted.

NOTE: In view of Dr. Wheelon's report to me and the COM's [redacted] and USIB action, I supported, and in effect urged, proceeding with the [redacted] budget.

With respect to [redacted] I reported that the briefing of TITAN III was most disappointing and that I was shocked and surprised to learn there was no TITAN III pad programmed for the Pacific missile base. Hence, we could not depend upon TITAN III for any reconnaissance program.

In this connection I found that Vance was aware of this deficiency but not fully cognizant of the implications of this situation. However McNamara had personally written to Secretary Zuckert, instructing him to do something about a TITAN III pad at PMD. Zuckert had not acted. McMillan reported that for two years the Stennis Committee had thrown out the request because he could not justify the TITAN III pad on the basis of an established mission. I said that I thought this was totally wrong and that it was sad this matter had been let drift and agreed to see Stennis personally and try to get some money put in the military construction authorization on the appropriation bill which is now being considered by the Stennis Committee. McMillan can furnish me the details this morning and I have to see Stennis.

NOTE: This morning Dr. McMillan called me and said the military construction authorization bill had passed the Senate Committee and it was too late to do anything on this matter.

I said in view of these circumstances it is futile to go ahead with the limited work authorized in the Vance letter on [redacted] and therefore conceptual design, and sufficient detailed engineering to demonstrate the concept, weight, structural features, etc. of the spacecraft must be included as recommended by Dr. Land, otherwise everything that was done might be for naught. After some discussion it was agreed that CIA would proceed with the work authorized by the Vance letter and, in addition, the spacecraft design which should be done on a competitive basis unless circumstances foreclose doing so.

The question arose of the employment of the systems engineer and I stated that this would be done at some point and, hopefully, on a competitive basis, although this type of contract was difficult to award competitively. McMillan agreed.

I recommended that at least [redacted] be set aside. This was agreed. Money to be released as work progresses and negotiated or competitively awarded contracts require the funds.

With respect to the FY '66 budget, I said that I did not feel the development work on [redacted] would be completed so that we could establish the '66 budget; however, I said that it would probably be necessary to include an adequate amount for "System II" in the '66 budget. I said I felt we could find sufficient funds in FY '65 to cover all work done during that year.

There were no allusions to any other search systems. I did not bring up the S-3 system, which I now understand is the old combination LANYARD and CORONA system discussed with USIB.

With respect to the continuation of the Lockheed contract, McMillan made a very impassioned plea for the [redacted] stating that the work done by the 12 [redacted] engineers had really established the engineering criteria which had since been followed by Lockheed and undoubtedly contributed to the successes. He said that he felt that since he was in a position of responsibility as the Director of NRO, he should have the authority to introduce this contractor. I strongly protested, stating that the program was a success, that I was informed in an emphatic manner by Lockheed that the introduction of [redacted] would be confusing and delaying, and that I, too, had a responsibility in connection with the intelligence, and I thought he was making a serious mistake. The idea of the contract to [redacted] was strongly supported by Fubini and Vance and therefore I said that if it was the majority view of the group that this contract should be let, he could go ahead but I wanted him to recognize my dissent.

It was my feeling that this change in the CORONA program at this late date represented a very serious danger and that if it in any way impaired the schedules of CORONA or its successes and thus the input into the intelligence inventory, I had to hold them totally responsible for the deficiencies. McMillan explained that the contract would be extremely limited, that [redacted] would not be empowered to confuse or upset the program, that they would merely be in a position to assist Lockheed as they had done in May and he was confident that the results would be beneficial and, if they were not, the matter would be reconsidered.

There were no discussions of [redacted] or [redacted] because of time. It was agreed we would meet next Tuesday although McMillan will not be present.

[redacted]

