

~~SECRET~~



11 September 1965

Notes on the Briefing of Dr. Flax, Mr. Reber, and [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] 9 September 1965

Also Present:

[REDACTED]  
Mr. McMahon  
[REDACTED]

Part-time Attendees: Dr. Wheelon  
[REDACTED]

Mr. McDonald  
[REDACTED]

The purpose of this meeting was primarily to brief Dr. Flax the soon-to-be-named D/NRO.

[REDACTED] began the briefing by addressing himself briefly to the organization of the Office of Special Projects. He indicated that this was a new office staffed to meet our responsibilities under the new NRO agreement. He touched briefly on each of the sub-sections of the office and identified Mr. McDonald as heading up Project Administration with a few words about his responsibilities in the administrative, contracts, fiscal, and PERT areas. [REDACTED] was introduced as the Chief of the Design and Analysis Division. [REDACTED] comments were to the effect that he was involved in the preliminary design necessary prior to the "buy-off" of a new system. [REDACTED] then briefly touched on the [REDACTED] staff, the Follow-On Search Systems staff, and the CORONA staff. When he reached the point where he spoke of our responsibilities vis-a-vis manning the CIA section of the NRO Staff, [REDACTED] asked if this meant general chain of command and [REDACTED] said no--that the persons indicated were there for headcount only and that they would report through their normal NRO chain of command. Dr. Flax interrupted at this point to say that he had hoped that there would be no thought of himself being identified only with DOD elements of the NRO

Declassified and Released by the N R C

In Accordance with E. O. 12958

on NOV 26 1997

~~SECRET~~

with Jim Reber being identified only with CIA elements but rather that they would be considered as the Director and Deputy Director of a National Office. He did grant, however, that because each was more familiar with the workings of his parent organization that it would be only natural for Jim's interest to lie with CIA and his with DOD.

The only other comment concerning the T/O was when [redacted] queried as to the makeup of the Boston Office whereon [redacted] replied that this was a security officer. [redacted] asked if we had any thoughts of putting a technical man in place there and [redacted] replied that while we now have a LMSC man in Boston to monitor things at Itek we might well consider placing an OSP staffer along with the security man depending on how things sort out.

[redacted] then touched on the issues that now confront us and referred to the relatively minor problems in the CORONA improvement program particularly with regards to the SI. Flax asked [redacted] if he had been close to these problems and [redacted] replied affirmatively. Flax indicated that we would just have to sit down and iron out our difficulties. At this point Dr. Flax made one of many comments concerning interfaces which he felt were kind of sloppy under the new agreement. His point was that interfaces must make sense and that we cannot compromise on illogical choices. [redacted] agreed that CIA and Air Force cannot fight but must agree. Dr. Flax concurred and said that certainly the new agreement was subject to interpretation and that we must however comply with the basic intent of the agreement. [redacted] indicated lastly that we were going to get into a substantive discussion of CORONA and the follow-on search system later and that we were not going to mention the [redacted] Program at this time. Dr. Flax said that he had been reading the "5 foot book shelf" and that he has recommended a one and one half month interim [redacted] program to Mr. Vance.

[redacted] spoke briefly on the need for CIA (OSP) to have R & D funds available for "seed corn"; these funds to be used primarily by [redacted] Advanced Design group. [redacted] indicated that we need more exchange in these advanced areas between the several elements of the NRO and also the need to determine how far we should go

~~SECRET~~

separately in these areas. [REDACTED] commented that he felt that duplication (CIA and AF) was needed in some areas and was not needed in others. He also added that Dr. McMillan had agreed to the use of these R & D funds previously. A general discussion of these R & D funds ensued and all agreed that ground rules must be established for both OSP and [REDACTED] added parenthetically to Dr. Flax that these R & D funds would also be necessary in the aircraft areas (OSA). [REDACTED] summed up this discussion by reiterating the necessity of regular channels of communications with an orderly exchange of reports.

CORONA

[REDACTED] stated that we are now planning for three more years of the CORONA program since this is about the amount of time it is going to take before CORONA can be replaced by the follow-on search system (FOSS). He also mentioned that even after the FOSS becomes operational we would keep some CORONAS in reserve for the mapping mission.

[REDACTED] mentioned also as a preamble that CORONA has been a most successful program in terms of the national requirement and that this was in great part due to the team of contractors which has followed this program through from inception to the present.

He then briefly covered charts pertaining to the TAT and TAD and mentioned that the definition of sensor as used in the NRO agreement was a part of our (CIA-AF) problem. He explained our logic in this regard as being analogous to the purchase of a camera at a drug store wherein the mechanism for taking pictures had to be housed in a box. He stated that this was the prevailing logic in our definition of a sensor.

[REDACTED] then briefed on the aerospace vehicle, and showed a blowup of the CORONA-J vehicle. Dr. Flax asked if his understanding was correct that the present two main cameras would be replaced by one camera. [REDACTED] said

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

that in essence he was correct and that what had been previously two separate units would now be treated as one. [REDACTED] then mentioned that we were also replacing the two SI cameras with one. (At this point Dr. Flax indicated that this is what he had referred to when he asked [REDACTED] about his understanding that the two main cameras were being replaced by one.)

[REDACTED] next covered the history of the SRV and showed how the recovery vehicle would need to be rearranged to provide room for the DISIC film. At this point [REDACTED] made the statement that the SRV must have been over-designed since it had a history of perfect operations and for this reason we were somewhat hesitant to change the system although we feel that the state of the art would allow change with maximum reliability. He then mentioned the relationship of the SRV to the sensor definition problem in that there are such close relationships between the SRV and the camera per se.

[REDACTED] then briefed in rapid order on the re-entry sequence, the operational cycle, performance specs, mission limitations, and other technical operational characteristics.

(At this point Dr. Wheelon entered the meeting.)

[REDACTED] next outlined the history of the CORONA evolution in more detail and mentioned that we consider the present J system as J<sub>1</sub> with the Thorad as the J<sub>2</sub> (PG), and the constant rotating camera with PG and the Thorad as J<sub>3</sub>. Dr. Flax asked what was holding up the action on J<sub>2</sub> and J<sub>3</sub>. Stewart replied that it was primarily administrative inaction on the coast and that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have been continuing a series of meetings to resolve these issues. [REDACTED] said that the performance of the camera has been excellent and that in the three recent failures there was no camera malfunction as such. After [REDACTED] comments on program performance Dr. Wheelon said that there had been some thirteen failures before the CORONA Project got off the ground; it was pointed out by the assemblage, however, that most of these were Bio/Discoverer launches. [REDACTED] then addressed himself to the definition of payload integration and explained that the Agency should have control over the Agena peculiarization. Dr. Flax said that he thought what we really meant was the Agena

~~SECRET~~

peculiarization peculiarization, in that the Air Force first modified the Agena prior to the LMSC-A/P type of modification. (At this point a short discussion ensued between Mr. McDonald and [REDACTED] concerning why it costs the Air Force [REDACTED] more for the recovery vehicle on the [REDACTED] Program than it costs us on the C Program. Mr. McDonald said this was probably due to the fact that we buy our R/V unmodified and Lockheed modifies it on the coast whereas the [REDACTED] Program buys a modified R/V from G-E.)

Some discussion then followed on the background of the CIP which emphasized to Dr. Flax our feeling that there should be no change in the modus operandi as concerned LMSC and G-E.

[REDACTED] covered next some more items on the CIP such as the PG and new programming (in real time commands). Some discussions followed concerning the 14 versus 30 day on orbit lifetime. It was pointed out that more than 14 days in orbit would necessitate extensive change in the Agena. Other CIP items discussed were the DISIC, the orbit adjust, the Thorad, and the Itek CR. [REDACTED] mentioned that other items under consideration were the ESM shield, a new battery, the capability to bring back 20 more pounds of film per bucket, and also the M/H APADS data block which would help PI's. As a final item he mentioned that a radar altimeter is also being considered which would make height measurements accurate to 100' versus the 500' we now get. A general discussion followed concerning getting the cartographic community to define what they need.

As regards the CIP [REDACTED] said that no go ahead had been given LMSC for barrel procurement. [REDACTED] pointed out that while we have been purchasing cameras, we would end up with no R/V's etc. [REDACTED] agreed that something had to be done immediately and that we must call in the contractors and initiate action. [REDACTED] remarked that if we need more cameras we can buy them in FY 68 since the FOSS can't possibly make it by mid calendar 67. At this point [REDACTED] touched on the CIA and USAF responsibilities on CORONA and mentioned that there should be no intent to change the existing program. Dr. Flax agreed and reaffirmed that the status quo should be maintained. He reiterated his comment, however, that a careful selection of interfaces must take place.

SECRET

With regard to operational control Dr. Flax agreed that we should not have to be concerned over such issues and that we should be able to address ourselves instead to more troublesome technical areas. [redacted] said that the CIA-AF differences about operational control were primarily caused by semantics. As he put it, when CIA says "operational control" what is referred to is the A/P and CIA believes that should be a CIA responsibility; when he refers to operational control, he refers to the SOC and believes that this is under direction of the D/NRO. [redacted] then skipped charts to show Dr. Flax the current mode of operation and gave him an explanation of the proposed operating mode. Dr. Flax asked [redacted] if he had looked into our proposal and he replied affirmatively with the explanation that he had made the improvement of CORONA operations his personal crusade. He also scored the poor operational setup in the West Coast. Dr. Flax then asked [redacted] to again cover the current operational mode so that he could understand the new proposal. (The heart of the new proposal is that in the CORONA program there would be a joint operations center with a CIA Director of Operations and an Air Force Deputy). [redacted] explained to Dr. Flax that this would be physically located in the STC which would necessitate rearrangement. Dr. Wheelon asked why CIA would be in charge. The answer Dr. Wheelon was given was that sensor considerations dictate operational decisions and since the Agency was involved in developing the sensor CIA would therefore have operational control. Dr. Flax said he hoped that in time we would lose the identity of CIA and Air Force insofar as operations were concerned and look on individuals as assets to a national program. Dr. Flax also mentioned that we must have clear cut lines of responsibility and authority at all levels and all functions. He cited the fact that while the USAF elements of the NRO are directly responsible to the D/NRO the CIA elements in essence are not. Dr. Wheelon took exception to this and said that it was most difficult to have two bosses and cited [redacted] problem with respect to working for both the Under Secretary of the Air Force and the DD/S&T. Dr. Wheelon continued that he liked to see a soup to nuts concept of program development and operations where one agency was responsible for an entire program. Considerable discussions then following concerning this issue with Jim Reber producing a mythical [redacted] who was the operations officer on an Air Force developed program with a [redacted] in his role on a CIA

SECRET

developed program. The point that Mr. Reber made was that the agency which developed, procured, and tested a system should logically be expected to follow through with operations. Dr. Flax commented that in dealing with these complicated systems knowledgeable people must always stay in the loop. As a final comment Jim Reber said that all operations must be under the final control of Dr. Flax regardless of which agency developed the system.

(At this point Dr. Wheelon suggested that he brief Dr. Flax, Jim Reber, and [REDACTED] on the organization of the DD/S&T in his office and invited [REDACTED] to accompany them. This was followed by lunch with Mr. McMahon joining the group.)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**\*\*\*NOTICE OF REMOVED PAGES\*\*\***

**Pages 8 through 11 are not provided because their full text does not contain CORONA, ARGON, LANYARD programmatic information.**