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31 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Report of Visit to West Coast Facilities

1. I had a most enjoyable visit with Lt. Colonel Murphy during the period 19 thru 21 July 1961. This visit was very productive and educational because it gave me an opportunity to see for myself the various phases of the operation as they transpire at the "skunk works."

2. There were several meetings which I attended as well as numerous discussions that were held as the opportunities presented themselves. The following is a summary of these actions:

a. The Establishment of Priorities for Airlift:

Conversations between Lt. Colonel Murphy, [redacted] and myself resolved the most recent problem of the priority request for covers to be used on the drop test. I am confident that if the actions recommended by Lt. Colonel Murphy are complied with future passes will be very limited. These procedures will verify the need prior to the submission of any requests.

b. The Operational Use of C¹¹¹ Instruments:

A decision has been made that Mission 9021 will not use C¹¹¹ camera. There was an investigation into the feasibility of using J-23 film with a C¹ instrument. This idea was discarded because of the lense limitation of the C¹ camera. Due to the unreliability of the C¹¹¹ I plan to submit a paper on the operational requirements for continued justification for C¹ cameras to be maintained in the inventory.

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c. Conflict of SAMOS Program with Our Launch Schedule:

I'll submit a paper on the interference which the SAMOS launch could have on our mission now scheduled for launch on 13 August 1961. The importance of a readiness date will be stressed and why it is vital that this request be forwarded promptly.

d. Changes in Orbital Period:

The advantages of trying to obtain a lower orbital period was discussed. This will decrease the orbital altitude and produce photography of a more desirable scale. It appears that we can expect advances in this area with improved performance of the accelerometer control.

e. Launch Limitations:

Decisions were reached which were agreeable with Lt. Colonel Murphy, Lt. Colonel Bumm, Major Buzard, and myself of this all important subject. These will be used as planning factors until new limitations are agreed upon.

Thermal Limitations at Launch:

Special paint can be applied to the vehicle to produce a safe launch anytime between 2000Z to 0700Z (1200 PST - 2300 PST).

Recovery Area Limitations:

All recoveries should be planned to occur three (3) hours prior to darkness in the designated recovery area. Under normal conditions an advanced notice of six (6) hours must be given for deployment of the recovery force aircraft.

1. Solar Flare Effects:

During this visit there was sudden and severe disturbances taking place on the sun. This action necessitated a thorough investigation into the problem of solar flares. A meeting was held in which

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several experts in their field attended and the following general conclusions were reached:

- (1) Most severe solar flares cannot accurately be forecast.
- (2) The go-no-go condition for this program would be an accumulative dosage of two roentgens.
- (3) Under normal conditions a radiation level of .4 - .6 roentgens can be expected.
- (4) If in orbit every attempt should be made for an early recovery. However, protons which bother us travel at nearly the speed of light and it is very doubtful that the vehicle can be recovered in time.

g. General Policy of Film Usage:

To establish definite perimeters to be used on future missions the following procedures regarding film usage were agreed upon:

- (1) Film will be used as soon as possible after giving careful consideration to weather and the areas of interest.
- (2) If weather conditions are favorable film will be expended to the level of approximately 90% and recovery will be effected on the third day.
- (3) If for any reason recovery on the third day is not advisable Lt. Colonel Murphy will notify headquarters of this fact. This would normally occur at the end of the first day.

h. Sun Angle Information:

Because of the availability of sun angle information obtained from the computers Lt. Colonel Murphy agreed to furnish the CORONA Section with this information as it becomes available to him. This will be more accurate and will save many hours of work for us.

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i. Aids for the CORONA Program:

It was very nice of Lt. Colonel Murphy and several Lockheed employees to offer assistance in the procurement of visual training aids. These will be most helpful in our program for overhauling the CORONA briefing. In addition, the tools which are needed to expedite the plotting of the actual ephemeris are being made under his supervision.

Lt. Colonel Murphy loaned me his copy of the Basic Principles of Unmanned Earth Satellites, by A. L. Bell. Every effort will be exerted to obtain a copy for the CORONA Section.

j. Items for Consideration:

One aspect of the west coast operation which I believe should be brought to your attention is the need for an alternate to Lt. Colonel Murphy. Not only does this "single man in a position" concept restrict the individual's personal life, it also endangers headquarters interest should an accident or emergency remove the individual from the scene during a period of important activity. At this time Lt. Colonel Bunn has enough understanding of the operation to fill in during an emergency. However, does he have the authority to send and receive messages? With the imminent transfer of [REDACTED] to the west coast perhaps the necessary arrangements could be made so that he could temporarily replace Lt. Colonel Murphy should he desire to go on leave or be forced to be absent from duty due to an emergency.

In addition, there are many meetings Lt. Colonel Murphy attends during which the growing stages of the satellite reconnaissance program are being transformed in more definite concepts. It would be quite advantageous if there was a greater exchange of this information than is presently being done through our cable traffic. However, limited as we are in personnel at this facility I believe the amount we have been receiving is about all that we can expect. In this connection I am convinced that Lt. Colonel Murphy is doing an outstanding job and contributing immensely to the success of the CORONA program.


[REDACTED]
Major USAF

cc: Lt. Colonel Murphy

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