

D. Wheelon



13 January 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Carter

Mr. McCone wishes to discuss the attached with
you and Dr. Wheelon soon.

S/ [Redacted]
[Redacted]

Attachment

cc: [Redacted]

13 January 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

This memorandum summarizes the discussion that I had with Mr. McCone at lunch on the afternoon of January 13, 1964. I expressed to Mr. McCone my interest in arriving at an early resolution of some of the problems which interfere with the proper relationship with the elements that compose the NRO.

I suggested that one way of resolving this problem would be to assign to the CIA the responsibility for the research, development, engineering and the early flights of a new payload aimed at achieving the maximum resolution permissible with the present state of the art without compromising the breadth of coverage to the point which has been done in the past with L and [redacted] and is planned now with a follow-on to [redacted]. I suggested that this program come about as a natural consequence of the basic studies now being carried on by the Drell Committee. I further suggested that, after the first 4 or 5 successful flights, a smooth transition take place between CIA management of the payload and payload integration into a "routine" operational set-up under the detailed control of the Air Force but still subordinate to Plans and Policies direction from both the Director of Central Intelligence Agency and the Secretary of Defense (utilizing the intermediary of the NRO).

~~SECRET~~

I further suggested that as a part of this agreement the same rule be applied to the CORONA program that I was proposing for this follow-on broad coverage system; by this it is intended that the "keep well" steps necessary to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the CORONA program be made unmistakably part of the Air Force's responsibilities. To the extent however that additional research, development and engineering work appears necessary in the existing payloads to eliminate defects or make substantial improvements, that the capabilities of the CIA must be employed. Thus, the principle would be established that, despite the fact that transition to the Air Force of a project has taken place, still the development team maintains both an interest and a responsibility toward major improvements (as contrasted with routine, "keep well" engineering operations).

The above plan is designed to utilize to the maximum extent (as provided in the NRO Agreement) the unique capability of CIA which has been demonstrated in the past in various advanced developments as well as the strength, organization and capability of the Air Force which is uniquely equipped to carry on operations which have reached a character of routine.

~~SECRET~~

As part of this over-all reassignment of responsibilities in the NRO management, I stated that it would be expected that the Air Force would apply itself to the research, development, engineering and early test flights of a follow-on to [REDACTED] with exactly the same procedure toward the NRO that the CIA has in the broad coverage program.

EUGENE FUBINI