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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT : Letter to Secretary Vance
re Agency/ [redacted] Role
in CORONA [redacted]

1. This memorandum has attached two letters for your selection which are responsive to Secretary Vance's letter to you of 15 October 1964. We recommend for your signature the letter proposed as Attachment A.

2. In his 15 October letter, Secretary Vance has extended the intent of your 6 October letter to include several points which, if implemented, would limit [redacted] and hence the Agency's effectiveness in the CORONA program.

3. Specifically, you had stated that every phase of the CIA activities encompassed in the orange square on the chart attached to your 6 October letter would become a responsibility of [redacted]. This included the flow of NRO funds and technical direction from [redacted] to the payload contractors. All of these activities, however, would be conducted under the direction of [redacted].

4. In Secretary Vance's letter, he places technical direction with [redacted] then establishes [redacted] as the CORONA Project Director, and later states that technical directions on approved changes would be prepared by the CORONA Project Director [redacted] and forwarded to the contractors. In doing so, [redacted] who would be charged with the responsibility for the payload, would not control the where-withal to execute necessary decisions, i.e. technical direction. The attached letters address themselves to this point.

Declassified and Released by the N R O

Accordance with E. O. 12958

NOV 26 1997

*These 3 copies not signed
at the [redacted] request - originals
were sent to DDCI on 3 Nov 64 (copies destroyed)*

[redacted]

[redacted]

~~SECRET~~

[REDACTED]

5. We also feel that the center of gravity of the CORONA program should focus on the payload, payload requirements and that the program be oriented at all times towards its primary mission. We can help promote this by placing [REDACTED] as Chairman of the Advisory Committee and have so stated in each of the letters attached.

6. The proposed responses to Secretary Vance attempt to reaffirm our position. Attachment A meets each issue more directly and with greater clarity than Attachment B. We prefer "A" because we feel that the CORONA program cannot tolerate the continuance of fuzzy responsibilities and grey areas of control. The simplicity and directness of "A" leave little room for misunderstanding.

7. Accepting the assumption that the Agency can contribute to the CORONA program, and in fact has a responsibility to it, we should not deny to our representative, [REDACTED], the functional tools he needs to perform his duty to [REDACTED] or anyone else. We support the concept of consolidating the CORONA program under [REDACTED] and would like to foster the idea, as you have suggested, that [REDACTED] have two deputies in the CORONA program- [REDACTED] for the payload area, and [REDACTED] for the remainder.

8. By stating that [REDACTED] has direction over CORONA and granting [REDACTED] technical direction over the payload is similar to giving Dr. Wheelon direction and over-all management control of [REDACTED] but granting [REDACTED] the technical direction to the contractors.

9. By reserving for [REDACTED] the payload technical direction, we have in no way diminished [REDACTED] over-all management control and direction, unless, of course, it is the intent of Secretary Vance that the Agency not have in fact the true responsibility for the payload. If such is the case, we would question seriously then the

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[REDACTED]

advisability of wasting [REDACTED] talent in such a meaningless environment.

10. It is recommended that you sign Attachment A.

ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
for
Science and Technology

Distribution:
Copy

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(23 Oct 64)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C.

Dear Cy:

I am pleased that your memorandum of 15 October concerning the CORONA Program is in general accord with my proposal to consolidate the entire CORONA Program under [redacted] over-all management. I do find several comments in your memorandum which manifest a possible misunderstanding of exactly what I felt [redacted] role, and hence the Agency's role, should be in the CORONA Program.

As I suggested in my 8 October memorandum, and as was illustrated in its attachment, [redacted] operating under the general management and direction of [redacted] would be responsible for the technical direction of the payload contractors. My desire that [redacted] recognize [redacted] role in the payload area was to permit [redacted] to call upon [redacted] for whatever assistance he may require in carrying out the approved changes in the program.

Since CORONA is an ongoing operational program whose primary mission is photographic, it would seem appropriate if [redacted] as technical director of the payload, were established as Chairman of the CORONA Advisory Committee. Other membership could be drawn, as you suggested, from the KRO Staff, NPIC, etc.

Also under [redacted] would be the Palo Alto facility for the assembly, integration, and checkout of the payload system. Although the technical functions conducted by the Agency at Palo Alto would be an extension of [redacted] direction, I see no reason, at

[redacted]
[redacted]
Copy [redacted]

this time, to disturb the mechanism for operational support which that facility provides to the NRO Satellite Operations Center during CORONA on-orbit operations.

As I have suggested previously, I look upon [redacted] in his general management and direction of the CORONA Program to have two deputies, so to speak, one [redacted] responsible for the payload; the other [redacted] responsible for the booster, launch and tracking operations, and recovery efforts.

I believe that we are moving in the proper direction and have asked General Carter, upon returning from his Far East trip, to introduce [redacted] to [redacted].

Sincerely,

John A. McCone
Director

Distribution:

Copy [redacted]

[redacted] (23 Oct 64)

[redacted]
Copy _____ [redacted]

Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C.

Dear Cy:

I am pleased that your memorandum of 15 October concerning the CORONA Program is in general accord with my proposal to consolidate the CORONA Program under [redacted] over-all management.

Inasmuch as CORONA is an ongoing operational program, whose primary purpose is the acquisition of photographic intelligence, it would be most appropriate if [redacted] would look to [redacted] who would be responsible for the payload, to chair the Advisory Committee.

Additionally, I feel it would be proper functionally for technical directions on approved changes concerning the payload to be prepared and executed by [redacted] through his contracting officer to the contractor. [redacted] should be prepared to assist [redacted] in this area when required.

As I have suggested previously, I look upon [redacted] in his general management and direction of the CORONA Program to have two deputies, so to speak, one [redacted] responsible for the payload; the other [redacted], responsible for the booster, launch and tracking operations, and recovery efforts.

I believe that we are moving in the proper direction and have asked General Carter, upon returning from his Far East trip, to introduce [redacted] to [redacted]

Sincerely,

John A. McCone
Director

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