

25 November 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant to the Director
for Planning and Development

SUBJECT: Trip Report - Program Review Conference
WS 117-L and CORONA

1. Conferences concerning the above-mentioned programs were held at Palo Alto on the 19th and 20th of November respectively. The attached program lists the main topics covered at the WS 117-L conference. The CORONA conference covered topics peculiar to the CORONA area of interest.

2. Generally, both programs appear to be moving along in good shape. No changes in scheduling or programming were indicated; tests, deliveries, etc., were stated to be on time. Management of the varied aspects of the programs appeared to be well in hand; Lockheed appeared to be cognizant of all of the major problem areas and had started the necessary corrective action where needed.

3. Possible future problem areas:

a. The complexity of the WS 117-L sensing system and the feasibility of obtaining the desired results.

b. The tight delivery schedule that ITEK is committed to for delivery of the camera to the CORONA project.

c. Radiation: This is more of a problem with WS 117-L (Atlas phase) than CORONA due to the higher altitudes. Cognizance of the problem or corrective action was not covered in the WS 117-L program. Corrective action for protection against radiation in the CORONA project was covered but did not appear to be based on known facts or information. Evaluation of the information obtained on the Explorer flights by Iowa University concerning the problem of radiation indicate that at the WS 117-L altitude, radiation is such to completely fog the film. It is recommended that any corrective or preventive action for the CORONA program should be based on the Iowa University findings. Action to be taken by the Contractor based on instructions from the Director of D&P.

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In Accordance with E. O. 12958

on

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This document contains information
referring to Project CORONA

d. Recovery: This problem is peculiar to both programs.

(1) The sea marker proved to be unsatisfactory. No solution in sight.

(2) The Rescuelite did not meet specifications, due to low light output. Corrective action underway.

(3) Air recovery:

(a) In tests using 74 personnel type chutes, forty-nine were recovered. Using one type of operational drop chute; out of fifteen dropped, four were recovered and required an average of 1.5 aircraft passes for the snatch or hook-up. Eleven drops of another type of operational chute resulted in five being recovered and an average of two aircraft passes for the snatch.

(b) One of the problems involve the drop rate of the chutes; approximately 33 feet per second. Development of a satisfactory chute with a drop rate of approximately 20 feet per second is required. This will allow the aircraft to make three to four passes for hook-up. Although it was indicated that corrective action was being taken, it is felt that it will not be timely enough for the reasons indicated in the following sub-paragraph.

(c) The low number of successful air snatches is considered to be the result of the combination of weak chutes, high sink rate, and crew proficiency. Although the contractor indicated that corrective action is being taken in all cases, this matter will be given special attention to insure that an acceptable operational readiness exists by the time of the first CORONA launching. As added emphasis, you might desire to make mention of our concern in this matter in an early conversation with Col. Sheppard and [REDACTED]

4. There appeared to be a moderate amount of friction between IT&K and [REDACTED]. The major problem area involved the ability of [REDACTED] to retain the maximum system resolution through their processing techniques and equipment. Project personnel directly concerned with this area of interest are satisfied that system resolution will be retained through processing and if there is a degradation, the [REDACTED] techniques and equipments representing the latest state of the art will obtain the best result possible.

It is recommended that [redacted] and an [redacted] representative visit both organizations involved [redacted] and completely inform themselves of all the details and/or controversies involved. It is felt that the exchange of information that would take place would assist in getting these people together, as well as insure that the problem is adequately provided for.

5. Overall recommendation: That Project representative at future meetings include a photo equipment representative, a communications and/or electronics man, in addition to Mr. Kucera and the Operations representative. This recommendation is not based on reasons covered in this memo, but is based on discussions with contractor personnel concerning present and future activities.

[redacted]
Director of Operations

Att: Agenda

[redacted]