



7 June 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science & Technology

SUBJECT: The Annexed Memorandum (disk 5) [REDACTED]

Herewith are some offhand thoughts on the annexed memorandum.

Paragraph 2. Who "assigned the responsibility of the CORONA program" to CIA?

Paragraph 3. I begin to get lost in the woods towards the end of this paragraph. What is the implication of McMillan's personal assumption of responsibility for TD, and why did the interface between CIA and the Air Force quiet down when McMillan took the problem to PFIAC?

Paragraph 4. Here again the plot thickens to a point of no return. I am not sure what McCone agreed to or Vance agreed to, but they seem to shift partners with somewhat incomprehensible results. Also, they seem to retreat and advance and go back and forth, reluctantly. For the first time I have developed some sympathy for McMillan who is required to draft an agreement not only to represent these thoughts but also to implement them, practically by a personal visit.

Paragraph 5. Maybe Carter should not be allowed to become "completely cynical," nor (paragraph 6) should we let Mr. McCone become "very agitated."

I get the general idea and gather that you want to make Admiral Raborn aware of the various efforts by McMillan and the Air Force to take over control of the CORONA program and the CORONA contract and the various decisions to postpone a final determination of the procedures relating to the production, procurement, delivery and assembly of CORONA payloads pending an over-all resolution of the NRO. Maybe it would be possible to say this in a page or so. As I understand it, the last official word from CIA on this matter was the proposed CORONA agreement of 13 January 1965. Can we rest on this, pending acceptance or rejection of this proposal? Are we not entitled or indeed obligated to continue responsibility for technical direction?

As regards the last sentence of paragraph 9, I do not entirely understand why splitting TD and ~~the~~ contracting function would necessarily constitute an abuse of the DCI statutory authority. It would seem to me that a case of abuse of authority is greater if both the technical direction and the contracting function are turned over. This would seem to be an argument for retaining both responsibilities or, at the very least, retaining the contracting function.



D/DCI/NIPE

[REDACTED]

Typist in Room
[REDACTED]

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
SUBJECT: Technical Direction of On Going CORONA
Payload Contracts

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to make you aware of a s
I have approved to clarify the origin of technical direction
on the CORONA payload contractors let by CIA ^{on} MAY 1964.

2. In the beginning (1958), CIA was assigned the
responsibility in the CORONA program for development and
procurement of the reconnaissance payload [cameras, film,
recovery vehicle, and spacecraft] and the management of target
requirements, cover, security and orbital payload operations.
The Air Force was to supply the THOR/AGENA booster and the
launching, tracking and recovery facilities. This CIA partici-
pation was gradually modified and reduced, so that by summer
of 1963, CIA was doing little more than writing contracts for
the payload elements. Its responsibilities over targeting and
mission control, characterized by the Satellite Operations
Center, [REDACTED]
in APRIL 1963. CIA did retain nominal control of the
AP facility in Palo Alto where the payload components were
mated, tested and programmed. The joint CIA/Air Force
mechanism for making technical decisions on the overall system,

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Configuration Control Board /CCB/, had not met for some time and the Air Force was proceeding with a major CORONA improvement program without involving CIA. It was at this point that I entered the scene, with the charge to strengthen CIA participation in satellite reconnaissance. At this point, CORONA was our only satellite program.

3. Almost immediately, McMillan made a formal proposal that the Air Force take over the entire program. He made the point that he could not be held responsible for the success of CORONA missions if the responsibility for the booster and payload was divided between the Air Force and CIA. Specifically, he wanted CIA to turn over the payload controls and the AP facility to Air Force control. He also proposed ?
the CCB be formally abolished. McCone did not buy the bargain or the variants which followed it, whereupon McMillan ~~assumed/~~ personally assumed responsibility for all technical directives * in August. During an overseas absence of the DCI, McMillan took his CORONA problem to the PFIAB and the CORONA interface between CIA and the Air Force quieted down. This action resulted in the May 1964 recommendations on modification of the NRO as a whole, and recommended that the Air Force take over all satellites. The DCI protested vigorously against the whole report and it was set aside.

4. The debate on CORONA proper then resumed in September 1964 at a new pitch. There followed a series of very high pressure weekly NRO Excom discussions between McCone/Carter and

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Vance/McMillan/Fubini on the specific details of CORONA payload responsibilities. One must read the memoranda of these meetings to appreciate the intensity, duration, and confusion of this debate, one which ran all fall. Vance took strenuous positions on the basis of Fubini/McMillan briefings. McCone ^{!!} _{ill} was/informed on the program specifics. The net of it seems to me to have been that McCone agreed to put [redacted] up front on CORONA, while Vance agreed that CIA should participate more fully in CORONA and take larger responsibilities for the payload. The DCI specifically gave [redacted] "complete technical direction," but later retreated substantially. It was agreed that Carter and McMillan had insisted that the [redacted] be inserted in the CORONA program to provide systems engineering for the payload, (but not the booster) and thereby to provide a technical foundation for the direction now expected the Air Force to give the contractors. The issue of [redacted] went back and forth, with McCone finally reluctantly agreeing. McMillan would draft an agreement to represent these thoughts and implement them on the West Coast by a personal visit.

5. General Carter sent McMillan a proposed CORONA agreement on 13 January 1965, which had been staffed out between NRO and CIA senior officials. McMillan has never responded to this proposal and that is how matters now stand. When it became clear that McMillan did not want to conclude

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an agreement with significant CIA participation in CORONA, Carter and McCone began to backwater. There followed a series of attempts by McMillan to transfer "on an ad hoc basis" the on-orbit payload analysis and control responsibilities of CIA to Air Force, each of which was met vigorously by General Carter. Finally, Carter became completely cynical and wrote McMillan on 16 March 1965 that the "specific problem of [REDACTED] participation has been overrun by the larger question of active CIA participation in the CORONA program." He went on to advise McMillan: that he had "instructed [REDACTED] /The CIA project manager/ to reestablish this coverage (with ~~Lock~~/ Lockheed) along the old lines." Running through all of this has been the McCone/Vance theme of a "no change until a final understanding is reached", and CIA has used this to resist much of the McMillan offensive.

6. While this high level exchange was proceeding, we undertook to build and refine our staff technical and support capability to handle CORONA and other satellite programs. [REDACTED] was given project responsibility for the CORONA payload in August 1964 and we began to build a small but strong group around him within the Special Projects Staff, under [REDACTED] the activities of this group have been quiet but assured and they now exercise de facto technical and program control over the payload contractors. They have been accepted by the Air Force as their proper interface with the payload

contractors and, despite the recognized competitive elements of the problem, have expressed respect for [redacted] and his people, deferring to them on matters affecting the payload.

7. [redacted], President of ITEK, who manufacture the CORONA cameras, met with Mr. McCone, [redacted] and me on 20 APRIL '65 to discuss several tender subjects. Among these was the ITEK program for upgrading CORONA which had been promoted with Land but not surfaced to CIA. Mr. McCone became very agitated and made two points quite clearly:

"a. Until you are advised to the contrary by Mr. Vance and me, CIA alone is responsible for the CORONA payload, and

b. Within CIA, Dr. Wheelon and DD/S&T are responsible for the CORONA payload and anything you have to say on this program you should say directly to them."

[redacted] pointed out that the existing contracts were not this clear on who was in charge, which I confirmed and related to the long period of confusion on CORONA. McCone directed me to bring the CORONA contracts into line with his guidance to [redacted] and [redacted] expressed appreciation.

8. Contracts for General Electric, Lockheed and ITEK totalling \$ [redacted] for the coming round of hardware have been under negotiation since April 1964. An essential ingredient of this finalization was the explicit designation of the origin of technical direction to the contractors. The

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CIA contracts people recognized this as a crucial issue brought it to our attention, and acting on our direction, postponed finalizing these contracts until the Carter/McMillan discussions could decide who would be in charge. In the meantime, Carter was replaced and I could not find the necessary time to bring this matter before you both. A point was reached on 6 May 1965 when the CORONA payload contracts had to be finalized and a choice between CIA and Air Force/ [redacted] technical direction made. I authorized the Special Projects Staff to designate CIA as the responsible element of Government for these contracts, since this is the way the system is now working.

9. I bring this to your attention because McMillan or Fubini--and possibly Vance--may claim that we have gone back on our bargain. Quite frankly, there have been so many conflicting and confusing bargains, discussions, letters, proposals etc., that I cannot tell precisely where we stand. I was not a party to any of these discussions, but feel sure that CIA and DOD are not standing on the same square. Rather than try to decide the issue myself, I elected to reflect the present mode of operation in the contracts. If we decide to withdraw from our participation in the CORONA program, we should turn over both the technical direction and contracting function to the Air Force. In the meantime, I consider it undesirable to split the two and thereby abuse the DCI statutory authority for covert expenditure of confidential funds.

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