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25 February 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: CORONA Trip Report - 19 February 1959

1. Master Schedule: The first CORONA launching is now scheduled for 20 May 1959. Leading up to that will be an engineering launch on 25 February 1959 and a bio-med launching in March and April. The malfunction on the first engineering test on 21 January has been considered as one of the two engineering tests. Even though an actual launching was not made, there was sufficient information gained to have made this of considerable benefit. Lockheed has developed a crash program which may be instituted in an attempt to recover some of the lost time. However, no definite schedule other than two per month beyond May has been projected.

2. Recovery Tests: There is to be a recovery test south of Hawaii on 26 February. This will involve dropping two nose cones from a B-47. One will be dropped so as to land in the water near one of the three destroyers which are participating and the other drop will be for air pick-up. Headquarters has three people who will be observing these tests -- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] will be in one of the C-119's [REDACTED] from Project Security will be on the destroyer and [REDACTED] will be observing ground procedures. Col. Sheppard is planning to be there and intends to ride in the command RC-121. It is expected that, through this exercise, there will be developed the final arrangements for secure handling of the recovered nose cone through delivery [REDACTED]. Lockheed has manufactured 40 recovery cans and has sent 14 to Hawaii for placement aboard all recovery vehicles.

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3. Target Weather Considerations: Both Lockheed and BMD representatives were quite concerned regarding the possibility of Headquarters delaying the first CORONA firing on 20 May due to target weather considerations. Although I agreed that at least on the first launching we would probably not be overly particular about specific areas, I emphasized that as a matter of principle, target weather must remain the primary controlling factor for timing of launch.

4. Launch Weather Criteria at Vandenburg is still CAVU. However, Major Bumm feels that after a launch or two range safety will undoubtedly relax this rather harsh requirement, and, in time, it will probably be reduced to as low as 2,000 foot ceiling and three miles visibility.

5. The Programmer Error which was quoted by [REDACTED] from the January meeting as being plus or minus 3° was checked out very thoroughly with Walt Levenson and [REDACTED]. Neither could explain where this 3° information originated. Both assured me that the error is plus or minus 1° of latitude as originally expected. [REDACTED] is confirming this in writing. [REDACTED] is also computing the linear coverage loss which would occur if an extreme perogee was experienced as he felt the 40% differential factor quoted in last month's report was high.

6. Equipment Chamber Temperature: Lockheed now feels that they can maintain equipment bay temperatures within designed specifications. However, ITEK is continuing to run a thermal testing of film transport temperatures as low as 40° .

7. Camera Qualification Testing The only serious difficulty reported at this meeting was with the main camera structure. In vibration and shake tests the camera failed to qualify in the lower frequencies. This will probably require an additional support member to the center of the main plate.

[REDACTED]
Lt. Col., USAF
Deputy Director Operations

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]