



13 November 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director (Plans)

THROUGH : Acting Chief, Development Projects Division *SSD.*

SUBJECT : COBONA Status Report

1. This memorandum is for information.
2. From conversation today with [redacted] I have learned that the Air Force has not at this moment named an AGENA D project officer to be Fred O'Green's counterpart. [redacted] seems to be one, if not the top, candidate. [redacted] apparently shares my concern that with all the attention being paid AGENA D we may be overlooking some highly desirable attention to improving the reliability of the AGENA B. This seems to me necessary, not only because of the dependence of the COBONA program on the B version until late next summer, but also the fact that the AGENA B will be used by other programs considerably beyond that time.
3. In response to a continuing request I have with SSD, Col. Ralph Ford submitted a note on problems encountered with DISCOVERER's 27, 28 and 29 [redacted] 1 of 1, attached). No. 27 was launched on 21 July and contained an ANOON payload. This vehicle did not achieve orbit due to instability in the THOR engine control. No. 28 was launched on 3 August with a C Prime payload. It likewise failed to reach orbit due to loss of hydraulic pressure. No. 29 was launched 30 August with the first C Triple Prime payload. Although the capsule was successfully recovered in the water, the unusual orbit was responsible for degradation in payload performance.
4. It is interesting to note that in these three instances and although considerable paperwork seems to be involved, two cases of what may be called human error took place and one instance of poor quality control of a vendor's product seems to have occurred. I find Col. Ford's report particularly interesting in view of our discussions of the Air Force requirement for the generation of paper by Lockheed as brought out at the 7 November meeting in Palo Alto. It seems to me that a rather considerable job is facing the Air Force and Lockheed people to convert an apparently large volume of ineffective paperwork to one of minimum size but of greater use.



for [redacted]
 [redacted]

~~SECRET~~

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