[redacted] Cy [redacted]

23 October 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. [redacted]

SUBJECT : CORONA Reorder

1. Contractors have been asked for reorder times on several occasions during the last few years. Data obtained in October 1969 indicated the following lead times from go-ahead to launch.

Pan Cameras - Itek	23 Mo.
DSIC - Fairchild	14 Mo.
Agena-Peculiars - LMSC	24 Mo.
Thor/[redacted] Boosters - [redacted] (DAC)	24 Mo.

2. These data were obtained during the time the last cameras were being assembled at Itek, and a sub-supplier-subcontract team was in being or had only recently been terminated. Facilities were also available at Itek for chamber testing, vibration, etc.

3. Note that in all cases the reentry vehicles can be made available from GE. They are generally similar to the [redacted] buckets and the resources are currently in use.

4. Data obtained last week from the same sources indicates the following lead times:

Pan Cameras - Itek	17 Mo.
DSIC	14 Mo.
Agena-Peculiars - LMSC	17 Mo.
Boosters - DAC [redacted]	17 Mo.

[redacted]

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5. The key difference in the resource situation from a year ago is most noteworthy in the case of the Pan Cameras (Itek). Extensive reorganization in that company has, of necessity, dissipated the project team which assembled and tested the cameras. Facilities needed to test the system have been eliminated in a determined effort to reduce overhead and the subcontract structure non-existent. Indeed many subcontractors are out of that business effort entirely and some components used in the system may not even be produced any more. Such a hiatus in the production line will require requalification before certification for flight or else the product reliability may be so low that little reliance can be placed on it. In the face of these facts, the 12 months schedule is dangerously unrealistic.

6. The situation at LMSC is different in degree only. The assembly team is intact, but the hardware fabrication and fabricaters are non-existent. This team must be reassembled. The "parts peculiar" to the Agena as a sensor spacecraft were made at the skunk works. That area was shut down last summer. It could be reconstituted in Sunnyvale but at a cost in time, and a breakin in the reliability process.

7. As backup information, reorder lead time when the J-3 system was in full production was 18 months. The lead time for the J-1s when they were finally in full production was down to as low as 12 months.

8. If such a reorder is authorized, the earliest date we could be assured of a first camera article is 18 months--and that carries no high guarantee of a reliable camera; nor does it insure quick reaction to crisis situations. It does not allow time for requalification, and assuming the test record of integration at LMSC of 5 months, we have 23 months before flight.

9. An assessment of the current status is in order. We have as of this date 6 CORONA's in our inventory. We are scheduled to fly one in November and one in January. Our use rate as per NRO direction is 5/year. Additionally, [redacted] has a modification under way to enable it to fly higher and achieve some search capability. Our reliability record of the last 6 CORONA's will be added as an appendix.

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10. If there is a demand or need for quick reaction systems, an approach like [redacted] should be pursued at once. It is much less costly than a CORONA reorder, it is simpler, it is "quick reaction," and it can be made available earlier. The operational mode must be carefully planned so as to insure no triggering actions in critical situations. That is feasible but as yet has not been adequately aggressively pursued.

11. In summary, no reorder of CORONA's appear logical at this time. Against a March [redacted] launch - a high probability - we have four (4) CORONA's in reserve. Against a June launch as postulated by the [redacted] panel, three (3) CORONA's are still in reserve, and we see no reason why the conclusions of the [redacted] panel are not still valid.

12. If no [redacted] launches occurred before the end of Calendar 1971 (December 1971), we would still have no hiatus in our collection resources if all CORONA's were [redacted] function properly. And with best and most optimistic [redacted] times of 24 months starting 1 November, the earliest follow-on CORONA launch would be November 1972--one year hiatus. Clearly a CORONA reorder does not answer the problem of a catastrophic [redacted] situation, and equally clearly the current CORONA resource protects us against the most pessimistic [redacted] launch schedule - June 1971 - by a full 6 months.

13. Equally clear is that the CORONA system will not provide crises management and that issue can only be resolved by the more cost effective, timely pursuit of a project like [redacted] as a stop gap for the year until a Near Time Readout capability is available.

/s/ [redacted]

[redacted]
Director of Special Projects

Attachment
[redacted]

Distribution:

Record Last Six KH-4 Missions

Mission	Launch	Recovery	Comment
1107	23 Jul 69	2 Aug 11 Aug	#2 camera lost first day; mono only, however, all coverage accepted by COMIREX against search requirement
1052	22 Sept 69	29 Sept 7 Oct	OK
1108	4 Dec 69	11 Dec 21 Dec	OK
1109	4 Mar 70	11 Mar 23 Mar	OK
1110	28 May 70	31 May 8 June	OK
1111	22 Jul 70	29 Jul 10 Aug	OK
1112	18 Nov 70	Scheduled	

Attachment to:
[redacted]

HANDLE VI[redacted]
CONTROL SYSTEM ONLY