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FILE: NRO

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

December 10, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, NRO PROGRAM A  
DIRECTOR, NRO PROGRAM B

SUBJECT: Responsibility for Operating Management of the  
CORONA Project

At the present time, and for historical reasons, the management of the CORONA project is divided, with the Director, Program B, responsible for "black" contracts, and the Director, Program A, responsible for the remaining contracts, for launch, and for conduct of orbital operations. Under this arrangement, there is no place in the NRO, short of my office, where the authority resides to review all applicable contracts for consistency and completeness, to exercise continuing contractual and technical surveillance over contractors and over the Service agencies, and to issue direction to contractors on all aspects of the program.

I feel that it is essential to establish a single point of authority within the NRO to which I can assign full responsibility for achieving consistently successful results that realize the maximum potential of the present system. After a careful analysis of the situation, I am convinced that the Director, NRO Program A, is the appropriate single point of authority. At the present time he is responsible for all operating aspects except contracting for procurement, engineering, and check-out of the camera payloads and recovery vehicles.

I hereby assign to the Director, NRO Program A, the full responsibility for the successful conduct of the CORONA project. In more detail, these responsibilities include:

1. Programming and procuring vehicles and payloads based on program and schedule guidance from DNRO;

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2. Launching, tracking, on-orbit control, and recovery operations, and delivery of product, in accordance with approved schedules and following procedures already in effect;
3. Reliability of operations, responsiveness of operations to schedules as promulgated by DNRO, and quality of product;
4. Technical responsiveness of the program to the needs of the intelligence community;
5. Engineering soundness of the vehicle-payload system and its integration;
6. Insuring that the necessary technical resources of the DOD and the CIA are brought to bear in the discharge of (4) and (5);
7. Recommending to DNRO any steps he considers necessary under (4), (5) and (6) which cannot be accomplished within his authority;
8. Annual program and budget forecasts in accordance with guidance from DNRO;
9. Reporting to DNRO on technical status, financial status, and progress against schedules and such other criteria as DNRO may direct.

In discharge of these responsibilities, the Director, Program A, will have authorities for the following:

1. Technical direction over all CORONA contractors;
2. Management direction, within the legal limits presently assigned to him, over all CORONA contracts;
3. Establishment of such management reviews of and controls over performance under CORONA contracts as in his judgment may be required, including the stationing at his discretion of representatives at contractors' plants;

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4. Such control over NRO personnel stationed at contractors' plants as may be required to exercise the authorities (1), (2), and (3) above in connection with CORONA contracts;

5. Initiation of such changes or improvements in the CORONA system or its operation as are in his judgment minor in scope and necessary under his responsibilities.

In exercising his judgment under (5), immediately above, the Director, Program A, is accountable to the DNRO and only to the DNRO. Major changes to the CORONA system will be undertaken only by direction of the DNRO.

In discharging his responsibilities, I expect the Director, Program A, to establish a Configuration Control Board advisory to him and incorporating qualified representatives of the CIA, the NRO staff, and of his own staff. Matters will be referred to the CCB, and action will be taken on the recommendations of the CCB, at his discretion. In exercising this discretionary authority he is accountable to the DNRO.

I expect the Director, Program B, to make available to Program A the advice, consultation, and assistance of appropriate CIA personnel as members of the CCB and as individual consultants. Program B will continue to provide Program A with security support and film courier support.

By this directive, management authority is now vested in the Director, Program A, over certain CORONA contracts, listed in the attachment, which are presently administered by a CIA contracting officer stationed at Langley. To facilitate the exercise of this authority, it is directed that these contracts be made the responsibility of a CIA contracting officer attached to the staff of the Director, Program A, and responsive to his management direction. I have considered as an alternative that these contracts can be terminated and re-instituted by Director, Program A, under Air Force "black" procedures. If this alternative appears simpler to both the Director, Program B, and the Director, Program A, I will authorize it. Date of transfer, by whichever mechanism we finally choose, will be as agreed upon by both Program Directors.

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Director, Program A, is requested to submit for my approval a plan for consolidating the management responsibilities hereby assigned to him into an organization directly responsive to him as SAFSP. This plan is to include phased termination of Program 162.

*Brockway McMillan*  
Brockway McMillan  
Director  
National Reconnaissance Office

Attachment

CONCUR:

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John A. McCone  
Director of Central Intelligence

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CORONA/MURAL Black Contracts to be Transferred  
from CIA Procurement East to CIA Procurement West

<u>Contract No.</u>	<u>Application</u>	<u>FY 1962</u>	<u>FY 1963</u>	<u>FY 1964</u>
<u>Lockheed:</u>				
WS-1926	22 M Payloads	\$ 5.0	\$ 3.5	\$ .2
DM-2616	20 J "	-	5.0	5.1
	6 M S/By P/L	-	-	2.2
<u>Itek:</u>				
BB-450	27 M Payloads	9.8	4.4	.5
BB-550	15 J "	-	4.3	6.7
	6 M S/By P/L	-	-	1.5
<u>General Electric:</u>				
CC-1600	61 Recov Vehicles	-	4.8	5.9

Other Black Contracts to be  
Considered for Transfer

<u>Lockheed:</u>				
SJ-1939	3 Q Payloads	-	-	.1
KK-1010	A "	11.3	.7	.1
<u>Itek:</u>				
BB-550	3 Q Take-ups	-	-	.1
	2 G S/I & Misc	-	-	.1
	5 L S/I & Misc	-	-	.2

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