November 19, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. GORDON GRAY

SUBJECT: Progress Report on the Military Reconnaissance Satellite Program (Quarter Ending September 30, 1958)

1. The Reconnaissance Satellite Program, heretofore known as Weapons System 117-L, has been redesignated the SENTRY Satellite System. The SENTRY System includes the visual reconnaissance and ferret reconnaissance elements of the former WS 117-L program, but not the infra-red Very Early Warning Satellite System "which is being conducted as a separate program."

2. The first SENTRY test vehicle is scheduled for launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, on December 6, 1958 - two weeks later than originally planned. The rescheduling is said not to affect the over-all SENTRY program.

3. An increase in the allowable payload of the ATLAS-boosted SENTRY from 3,500 to 5,000 pounds has been made possible through the use of higher performance fuel.

4. Tracking stations are located at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California; Naval Air Missile Test Center, California; and in Hawaii. Other tracking stations will be located: 1 in Oregon; 2 in Alaska, 1 in New Hampshire; and 1 in Iowa.

5. The biomedical program, which has the objective of reentry and recovery of a biomedical package from orbit, is said to be progressing on schedule. It is planned that on the 17th pass over Alaska, a ground signal to the satellite programmer will command the satellite to pitch down on the 18th pass, at which time the recovery capsule will separate from the satellite. The capsule is to be recovered at approximately 10,000 ft., by means of a cable with hooks carried by a C-119 aircraft, which will snag the capsule's parachute.

6. (From other sources, it is learned that the biomedical program contemplates placing a large number of mice in a recoverable capsule to be attached to the satellite during the third and subsequent test launches.)

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