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NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE  
WASHINGTON, DC

THE WFO STAFF

15 September 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD  
SUBJECT: HEXAGON Block II

A meeting was held 30 August 1971 in [redacted]'s office for the primary purpose of reviewing certain funding adjustments in the Agency HEXAGON program. In the course of the discussion, Mr. Haas, who has recently replaced Mr. Patterson as the Sensor Subsystem Project Chief, made a brief presentation with regard to the approach which will be taken in accomplishing competitive Block II conceptual studies. Funding in the amount of \$1M for such studies was approved by a memorandum from [redacted] on 24 June.

Mr. Haas indicated that he plans to invite four contractors to competitively develop their concepts for a Block II sensor subsystem in accordance with two general options. He plans to be under contract by the end of September with a period of performance of four months.

The general options to be addressed by each contractor were described as follows:

Option A - Under this option the current camera performance characteristics and the basic optical bar design would be retained, but the mission life would be increased to 75-90 days. Contractors would be free to propose simplified and/or otherwise improved concepts for the film path and camera electronics to achieve increased reliability and reduced cost. The longer mission life is aimed at more optimum imagery collection and return from the three/year launch rate already planned for FY 75 and subsequent years.

Option B - This option would address much longer mission lifetimes of 145-180 days with the specific objective of reducing the HEXAGON launch rate to two/year. Appropriate increases to the film load and the number of RV's are to be considered. Contractors would be free to propose applicable simplifications to the existing camera design, such as reductions in the maximum scan width and variscan capability

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permitted by the increased number of target area accesses. Submission of a totally new camera design as a suboption would also be allowed.

Although Mr. Haas indicated at the time of the above meeting that his plans had not been reviewed by Mr. Brownman, he has subsequently indicated that he has been given approval to proceed. He has further advised that he plans to discuss his Block II effort with Colonel Krumpe on 16 September in Danbury in order to give SAFSP a basis for appropriate parallel studies.

Because of the four-month period specified, the results of the Block II concept studies will not be available to support a HEXAGON Block II issue for the November ExCom. Mr. Haas stated, however, that he is still looking at Block II implementation on System #19 (operational in early FY 77). Previous communications with CIA have projected a substantial FY 73 funding requirement (\$33M) to achieve this Block II schedule. Mr. Haas agreed that a mid-October review of the matter should be made. It would appear that any serious consideration of HEXAGON Block II will be impractical at the November ExCom due to the probable lack of substantive information from CIA and SAFSP. This would further imply that significant Block II FY 73 funding and the objective of System #19 implementation should be deferred.

The CIA plans are responsive to past DNRO desires to investigate the introduction of competition into sensor subsystem procurement and the achievement of lower recurring costs. Some of the more ambitious ideas which have received recent informal mention (for example, a film readout HEXAGON compatible with projected EO imagery transmission and receiving facilities) have, at least for the moment, been dropped from consideration. The current effort should eventually produce a reasonable spectrum of alternatives upon which to base HEXAGON program issues.

  
ROBERT A. SCHOW, JR.  
Major, CE, USA

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