

~~TOP SECRET~~THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTONSPECIAL HANDLING REQUIRED
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April 27, 1960



Dear Mr. President:

By memorandum dated August 24, 1959, you approved the inclusion of an electronic intelligence collection device in each of two planned satellite firings. This memorandum was in response to Department of Defense memoranda dated July 13 and August 18, 1959 which furnished you with information concerning the proposed interim electronic capability (Project CANES) which was undertaken by the Advanced Research Projects Agency in conjunction with the Department of the Navy.

As was pointed out in my July 13, 1959 memorandum, the Department of Defense and the intelligence community believe that this system is a complement to, and not a substitute for the SAMOS (formerly known as SENTRY) satellite system. It is believed further that the information obtained from the interior and isolated areas of the USSR will be of considerable utility in appraising the electronic results of SAMOS.

The technical development of Project CANES has now been completed. While it was originally planned to loft this payload in April of this year on TRANSIT II (Navigational Satellite), slippage in that program has caused a delay. It is now proposed to loft Project CANES on TRANSIT IIA currently scheduled to be launched from the Atlantic Missile Range on May 18, 1960.

As you were previously advised, the system has several operational safeguards to reduce interference and to provide considerable flexibility for decision as to its use.

CANES will be read out at one or more of our currently established overseas ELINT ground facilities. For test purposes the system has the capability of being triggered and read out over U.S. territory. As pointed out in our August 18, 1959 memorandum, the possibility that the retransmitted signals from CANES can be detected and identified in the USSR has been examined with particular care. The Department of Defense considers that detection would be extremely unlikely.

*Reignited to
by letter 5/5/60
#331 (to Don Lusk)*

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To allow for an additional margin of safety, we propose, unless there are political objections and you instruct us to the contrary, that after TRANSIT IIA is launched on May 18, 1960, to wait until June 1, 1960 before testing the CANES transmitter. In the event there is a slippage in the May 18 date, we further propose to allow a period of 14 days to pass after launch before activating and testing CANES. It will be tested first over Hawaii for a 30-40 second period. Thereafter, if found to be operational, we further propose to activate the transmitter from time to time as intelligence requirements dictate, on a carefully thought-out basis. In no event will the transmitter be activated operationally before June 20, 1960.



This letter has been coordinated with and concurred in by the Director of Central Intelligence and the Department of State.

If you approve the actions proposed above, we will proceed accordingly.

With great respect, I am

Faithfully yours,

Signed

D. E.

The President

The White House

May 5, 1960

Approved; with proviso that periods of activation over the Soviet Union are subject to further approval by the President.

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Dwight D. Eisenhower

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