

SAMOS
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Jan 1961

CHRONOLOGY OF SENTRY AND SAMOS PROGRAM 2 MARCH 1959 TO DECEMBER 1960

3 April 1959

Amendment No. 10 to ARPA Order 9-58 approved the AFMD Sentry Development Plan of 30 January 1959 to the extent it pertains to payload programs of visual readout, visual recovery, and ferret readout.

18 May 1959

AFMD was informed by AFDAT that WS 117L had been removed from Master Urgency List, and Discoverer and Sentry put on it with IR ratings. AF priority for all three programs remained as 1-A with 1-1 precedence.

26 May 1959

ARPA directed that the Mapping Program be deleted from Sentry. LMSD (Lockheed) was notified.

5 June 1959

Message from AFDAT to ARDC and AFMD followed up the action notification set forth in item 26 May 59 above. Message further directed that information be provided as to recovery of funds anticipated by cancellation of Mapping Program. The amount \$1.7 M had been allocated to the Sentry Mapping Program.

24 June 1959

AFMD was informed that ARPA had laid down ground rules for the initial FY 1960 budget determination. These were: Sentry \$135. M, with Sentry recovery program (\$25 M) to be deferred pending review. No increase to the above funds were available. AFMD was to submit revised development plans based on the above instructions.

15 July 1959

Revised Sentry development plan was submitted to AFDA, as required in 24 June instructions.

20 July 1959

ARPA, USAF, ARDC were briefed on programs outlined in the revised development plan.

7 August 1959

Message from Office Secretary of Defense to ARDC redesignated the Sentry Space Program of WS 117L to the SAMOS Program. The purpose as stated was to identify reconnaissance programs with an innocuous name that does not have mission association.

5 Sept 1959

OSD/ARPA Message authorized SAMOS readout program funding in accordance with 15 July 59 Development Plan for FY 60 funding of \$143.7 M. Also authorized award on SAMOS E-5 (recovery) camera only and directed cost submission.

6 Sept 1959

The OSD advised the Air Force Ballistic Missile Division of the decision to proceed with a recovery portion of the SAMOS Program.

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10 Sept 1959

OSD/ARPA Message authorized an increase of funds to: FY 60 to a total of \$148. M for SAMOS Recovery and for planning purposes, FY 61 level of \$170. M for SICG.

2 Oct 1959

AFDAT Message received stating that Development Plan should accommodate as far as possible both readout and recovery parts of SAMOS within \$148. M ceiling.

20 Oct 1959

ARDC Message quoted memo from SAF to Chief of Staff (13 Oct 59) directing that all SAMOS/MIDAS and Discoverer actions be handled in AFENC framework.

21 Oct 1959

AFEMD was advised by AFIAT that the Secretary of Defense had assigned responsibility for SAMOS Phase I to the USAF. AFDAT directed that a development plan be prepared by ARDC, Operational Plan by SAC, and Logistic Plan by AMC effective 23 November 1959.

27 Oct 1959

AFEMD forwarded a message to AFDAT in anticipation of a revised SAMOS Development Plan and Operations Annex. The message set forth a proposed SAMOS launch schedule for the period June 1960 to May 1962. The message further provided a sketch of subsystems E and F.

17 Nov 1959

SAMOS Program responsibility was transferred from JPA to the Department of the Air Force by memorandum from Secretary of Defense to Secretary of the Air Force. An Air Force development plan was requested for the program effective 15 January 1960. The plan would place emphasis on physical recovery and provide an initial launch of a recoverable payload well in advance of FY 62.

7 Dec 1959

Memorandum from Secretary of Defense to ASD (Comptroller) directed the transfer of funds from ARPA to the DAF for MIDAS, SAMOS and Discoverer Programs.

21 Dec 1959

SAMOS Program Office was directed to align program within fund ceilings with emphasis on photo over ferret.

30 Dec 1959

ARDC Message provided AFCEH recommendations for a SAMOS Subsystem I. The data processing system would be utilized as a link between the SAMOS E and F Systems read-out data.

15 Jan 60

SAMOS Program Office confirmed requirements for VHF Angle for Vandenberg (and West) Base.

15 Jan 1960

SAMOS Revised Development Plan was submitted to AFMC for approval.


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- 28 Jan 1960 Joint Tenancy Agreement for use of the FWR was accomplished and documented.
- 5 Feb 1960 Lt General B.A. Schriever in Congressional testimony before the House Committee on Science and Astronautics (Brook Committee) again stressed the urgency of the MIDAS, SAMOS, and Communications Satellite Programs.
- 15 Feb 1960 AFDMT Message stated that AFDMC had approved the SAMOS Development Plan dated 15 January 1960.
- 27 Feb 1960 Hq, USAF informed AFEDD that the Office of Secretary of Defense had approved a basic SAMOS and MIDAS R&D Program. The approval did not include authorization or funding for development of SAMOS and MIDAS operations.
- 4 March 1960 The Corp of Engineers was requested to proceed with arrangements for construction of the SAMOS Early Fix facility at Omaha.
- 18 March 1960 SAMOS Launch Pad #1 was completed at Point Arguello. Technical support building plans and specifications were released to the contractor.
- 20 April 1960 
- 23 May 1960 An investigation was made to determine the feasibility of carrying a 20 pound Piggy Back package for Vela Estel with SAMOS payloads. The purpose to measure high energy electrons (beta particles) in the lower Van Allen Belt. Results of the investigation indicated that the Piggy Back package could be carried without jeopardizing the primary mission.
- 24 May 1960 A SAMOS study was prepared which indicated an acceleration to the program in light of the national situation. Time for the presentation to General Schriever was confirmed for 14 June 1960 with further presentation to the Weapons Board on 15 June 1960.
- 2 June 1960 Hq, USAF directed the SAMOS Program Office to revise the SAMOS Development and Operational Plan to reflect a simpler program. This was in line with the directive issued by the Under Secretary of the Air Force on 27 May 1960 to the effect that the R&D exploitation and operational plans be re-evaluated due to considerable technical uncertainty of information that may be obtained by the various payloads of the system.

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3 June 1960 The first SAMOS flight Agena left the Systems Test Area at Lockhead.

July 1960 Department of Defense directed that construction of Early Fix Facility at Omaha suspended pending further review of requirements.

5 July 1960 Intelligence Requirements for Satellite Reconnaissance Systems were established by USIB.

5 July 1960 AFMID Proposal on 5 July 1960 Development Plan for SAMOS was presented to AFMID. Later the same day, presentations were made to Secretary Sharp and Under Secretary Guryk.

6 July 1960 EMD Development Plan proposal for SAMOS was presented to SAMOS Working Group.

8 July 1960 EMD proposal and Recon Panel comments were presented to Weapons Board and Secretary of the Air Force.

15 July 1960 The SAMOS Development Plan was presented to AFMID and later to DDR&E and other agencies. The National Security Committee was briefed in early August 1960.

20 July 1960 AFMID Message indicated approval of two additional Atlas launch pads with blockhouse adjacent to Complex 1, Point Arguello.

11 August 1960 SAF Order designated General Robert E. Greer as Director of the SAMOS Project with duty station at El Segundo, California. The project office would be a field extension of the Office Secretary of the Air Force.

12 Sept 1960 [REDACTED]

13 Sept 1960 Memorandum from SAF to Chief of Staff, USAF established policy stating that there would be no review or approval channels between the Director of the SAMOS Project and the Secretary of the Air Force.

10 Oct 1960 Secretary of Defense memorandum to SAF stated that action had been taken by the National Security Council and approved by the President to place the Air Force Satellite Reconnaissance Program (SAMOS) on a very high priority.

11 Oct 1960 The first SAMOS vehicle, 2101, was launched from Point Arguello on 11 October 60. The satellite umbilical did not release and the nitrogen fill line was pulled out of the Agena vehicle as the Atlas lifted from the pad. Separation

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and Agena engine ignition were normal. Agena attitude control had been lost. The thrust was not directed into the orbital injection plane. Engineering changes were directed to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

15 Nov 1960

Dr. Robert D. Fletcher, Air Weather Service Command, presented a briefing to members OSAP, HQ, ARDC, AFM, and SAMOS Project Office relative to AWS capabilities and limitations of providing weather forecasts for SAMOS and Space Reconnaissance Launches and orbits.

29 Nov 1960

The SAMOS Project Office presented a general SAMOS briefing to a Senatorial Group. Included were members of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

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