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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

16 June 1959

SUBJECT: Meeting on Project VEDAS

1. I attended a meeting on 15 June in Mr. Roy Johnson's office on the above subject. Present were: [REDACTED] from ARPA and Dr. Bruce Billings of Dr. York's office. It was agreed at the meeting that Project VEDAS would be carried forward provided Dr. York's office can arrange financing therefor, that the VEDAS shots would be treated as additional efforts in the DISCOVERER series, and that the VEDAS program would be organized and managed substantially on the pattern of CORONA, with two exceptions. These are: First, that technical management would be jointly by ARPA [REDACTED] and DPD/CIA; second, that the Army (more specifically the Army Map Service) would be regarded as a major, if not the primary, customer for whose benefit VEDAS would be conducted and that a representative of the Army in its capacity as customer would therefore be included in the planning for VEDAS.

2. The following additional points were touched on among others:

a. So far as possible the contractors chosen for VEDAS will be the same as those chosen for CORONA (LAC, GE, and ITEK).

b. A major reason for the decision to perform mapping in this manner was to encourage the maximum feedback from CORONA especially into the design of the VEDAS system and the conduct of VEDAS operations. Accordingly, such feedback should be encouraged at all levels.

c. This Agency would have responsibility for the security of VEDAS as for CORONA. Another of the most important reasons for the decision to organize VEDAS in this manner is to ensure that its handling is consistent with the maintenance of CORONA security.

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d. In accordance with this management concept, CIA would do the procurement of the VEDAS system but presumably not of the first and second stage vehicles. The manner of procurement of these vehicles was not, however, discussed or settled.

e. The program will consist of four flights. The objective is to have hardware ready so that a first flight could be made as early as July 1960 but it is anticipated that it may not be possible to meet a date earlier than September 1960. The estimated cost is [REDACTED] of which [REDACTED] is required immediately to permit initiation of work by GE and ITEK.

f. To date only [REDACTED] has actually been obligated for VEDAS and this has been for a GE/ITEK study. It is planned that these contractors should now immediately be given formal notification through whatever more or less overt channels were used for the initial contract that the VEDAS project has been abandoned. All subsequent work would be financed through covert CIA contracts. Action on these matters will be required within the next few days.

3. A strong request was made by Mr. Roy Johnson that we detail an individual on something close to fulltime to ARPA to help them with cover problems and to facilitate greatly improved coordination between ARPA and DPD/CIA. Mr. Johnson noted that ARPA is receiving a steadily increasing number of inquiries on the DISCOVERY series from many sources, including Congressional ones, and that it faces the difficult task of developing at least one new cover story a month for nearly two years. It was agreed that considerable unnecessary trouble has been caused in recent months by the dispatch of uncoordinated messages which created security problems and necessitated time-consuming interchanges to rebuild security. It was agreed:

a. That ARPA needs expert help if it is to handle skillfully the flow of inquiries.

b. That DPD/CIA must have full knowledge of the manner in which ARPA is handling both inquiries and all of its business communications relating to the DISCOVERY series.

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c. That ARPA needs to be kept better informed of our plans and traffic concerning DISCOVERY matters.

The above applies not only to the new Project VEDAS but also to CORONA itself. In the light of the discussion it is clear that the function of the man detailed to ARPA would be to help them with cover problems and to facilitate much more effective inter-coordination of activities. I find this case compelling and believe we should respond promptly, probably by the detail of [REDACTED] to ARPA. I believe the terms of the detail are that he should be based in the ARPA office in the Pentagon and should plan initially to spend somewhere between half to three-quarters of his time there and the balance of it in DPD. For non-witting personnel of ARPA and the Department of Defense he should be under ARPA cover. One of the advantages of his presence there will be the naturalness of his participation in many meetings in which an Agency representative as such would be out of place.

4. I believe [REDACTED] should be in touch promptly with [REDACTED] to work out the arrangement in paragraph 3. preceding. Likewise, Messrs. Kucera, [REDACTED] and Parangosky, with others as necessary should be in touch with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to arrange the action called for in paragraph 2.f. above. I hope we can have an internal meeting at an early date to discuss certain unresolved matters, such as the arrangements for the assignment and procurement of first and second stage vehicles. In the discussion with [REDACTED] another unsettled point which should be explored is the part to be played (if any) by BMD in the VEDAS program. Dr. Billings assumed responsibility for seeking out funds for this program and I will call him in a day or so to discover what success he is having. One more unsettled question I will mention is the part to be played by the [REDACTED] and our role, if any, with respect to that.

Distribution:

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