MEMORANDUM FOR OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING)

SUBJECT: SAMOS, MIDAS and DISCOVERER Research and Development Programs and Development/Operational Plans for SAMOS and MIDAS Programs

Reference: Memorandum for Secretary of Defense from Under Secretary of the Air Force, subject: Transfer of the SAMOS, MIDAS and DISCOVERER Development Programs to the Department of the Air Force, dated 18 Feb 1960, and your undated draft response to the 18 Feb Memo from Under Secretary of Air Force

1. It is understood that the referenced draft memo addresses itself solely to the subject of the R&D programs of DISCOVERER, SAMOS, MIDAS and that specific comment on the SAMOS, MIDAS Dev/Ops plans is awaiting JCS recommendations.

2. There is irrefutable evidence of urgent intelligence needs that are beyond the capability of the "C" program. We are currently re-examining the reliability and probability of success that can be expected from both the recovery and early readout systems. This examination is based upon review of our actual experience in the DISCOVERER program and extensive ground tests. These tests of the E-1 were made with the actual flight hardware and ground support equipment. It does appear that within the presently authorized funds an approach based upon an increase in the readout offers much higher probability of obtaining the intelligence information in the time period rather than extending the "C" program.

3. If a "C" program extension is considered necessary, then as a compromise it is recommended that our R&D programs for DISCOVERER, SAMOS, MIDAS be approved as submitted and that the Air Force be allowed to reprogram FY-61 funds from non-space programs to provide the number of additional "C" shots directed, with the understanding that there is sufficient flexibility to reorient the "C" program or the readout (E-1 or E-2) as will be justified by future development experience.