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SecDef-5-1N

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Washington

14 August 1961

Dear Mr. Douglas:

The Air Force has reported that the failure of the THOR booster on DISCOVERER' XXVII was due to contractor error. It is my understanding that there was a wiring error and that the circuit recheck procedure was inadequate to isolate the error which subsequently led to booster failure.

I take the most serious view of malfunctions which appear to be due to inadequate supervision and lack of proper controls on the part of the responsible contractor. Not only have the Services been asked to act promptly to correct such conditions, but they have also been instructed to give consideration to the contractor's performance record in future negotiations.

Please inform me of your analysis of the cause of the DISCOVERER failure and the action you have taken to prevent a recurrence.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

Robert S. McNamara

Mr. Donald W. Douglas, Jr.
Douglas Aircraft Company
3000 Ocean Park Boulevard
Santa Monica, California

Declassified and Released by the NRO

In Accordance with E. O. 12958

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