

~~TOP SECRET~~

20 September 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Carter
Dr. Wheelon



1. I have arranged to meet sometime between September 25-27 with Secretary Gilpatric to formally consider certain aspects of the National Reconnaissance Plan. The decisions of this meeting will serve as a directive to D/NRO who is charged with the responsibility of executing the agreed plan. The points I have in mind raising, and upon which I would like your advice in advance of this meeting, are:

a. The future of LANYARD. I am told (but this has not been confirmed) that the present NRO program upon which the '64 expenditures and the '65 budget is based anticipate the procurement of 19 LANYARDS. On the other hand, I have the impression (and this has not been investigated) that there is ^{no} an appreciable difference in resolution between CORONA and LANYARD; furthermore this is evidenced by the production of the one and only successful LANYARD mission. Also I understand but have not confirmed that a 4-day LANYARD mission will photograph about 700,000 square miles, whereas a 4-day CORONA mission will cover 10,500,000 square miles and a CORONA J twice as much if both capsules are productive. However, this would involve 8 days of photography. I am advised that the LANYARD and the CORONA cost about the same amount, namely [REDACTED] to launch. This is an essential ingredient of our analysis of the [REDACTED]

I personally insisted on pursuing the LANYARD because of worry that the [REDACTED] might fail. The second [REDACTED] apparently succeeded although I have not been informed as to just how precise the aiming or targetting was.

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The question therefore is: if the above is correct, if the LANYARD resolution is not an improvement and if the [REDACTED] is successful, should we at this time drop the LANYARD? Alternatively, should we not keep the LANYARD in an R&D status procuring two or three cameras, arrange for launching at an appropriate time, and then make a final decision after examining our results?

Revised - 23 Oct meeting

Declassified and Released by the NRO

~~TOP SECRET~~

In Accordance with E. O. 12858

NOV 26 1997

on _____

[REDACTED]
cc - Carter

b. How many CORONA J type missions should we program? It is to be noted that the present schedule submitted by the NRO calls for six CORONA Js during the balance of this year, with one in September, three in October, one in November and one in December, and with one CORONA M in standby. A committee chaired by [REDACTED] composed of representatives of the Office of Scientific Intelligence, Office of Current Intelligence, Office of Research and Reports, Office of National Estimates and the National Photographic Interpretation Center recommend twelve M type satellite missions per year and nine J type missions per year and if these are all successful then our intelligence requirements would be fulfilled. This report is [REDACTED] of 11 September. Do we wish to accept this recommendation and advocate basing the National Reconnaissance Plan upon it or do we wish to advocate a more intense plan for the next year? It is my thinking that we might suggest one CORONA J a month, starting with the September mission for each of the next twelve months and have one CORONA M in standby at all times as a backup against a mission failure. At the end of twelve months we can examine the results and make a judgment concerning the program for future years.

c. Number of [REDACTED] missions that should be programmed. Considerable lead time is involved in the [REDACTED]. It is my understanding that at the present time the NRO budget provides for twenty-two [REDACTED] but I am not advised of the schedule of launchings, other than one launching in October. What recommendation should we make, for [REDACTED] are very expensive, [REDACTED] per mission. On the other hand, they are very productive.

d. A second ARGON is scheduled for October. When the ARGON program was approved by USIB it was with the understanding that one successful mission was required. This was flown in August and it was USIB's opinion that the September-October mission should be held in standby and scratched if the first mission succeeded. The mission did succeed. I am not sure that the photography satisfied all of the requirements, therefore I would like to know whether a second mission is a requirement and if so, why.

e. The NRO agreement calls for the maximum utilization of the capabilities within both DoD and CIA. I receive continual

Resolved 23 Oct

complaints that D/NRO is directing NRO activities so that all satellite reconnaissance is an Air Force mission and the CIA capabilities in this field are being ignored, although CIA black procurement is being utilized to a considerable extent. I do not intend to recommend expansion of CIA's activities in the National Reconnaissance field, but I feel their capabilities must be maintained.

Note: By stating that I would not expand the activities I mean we would not seek to pre-empt areas that have been traditionally Air Force. On the other hand, if they have recently pre-empted CIA activities we should consider whether we wish to recapture these activities. I do not believe, however, that this should apply to the Satellite Operations Center, as this as a case to be taken out from under D/NRO is not a good one. It is manned by CIA personnel and is therefore a joint operation.

In response
as of 2-3-68

I would like your recommendations specifically and concisely stated as to just what CIA should do and the Air Force should do in the fields of the procurement of cameras, film and film processing. Also in research and development in the improvement of existing cameras, in the development of new cameras, in the improvement of film and in other areas which have to do with the improvement, the reliability of satellite photography and the resolution of the product. The position we take in this matter must be defensible from the standpoint of the traditional role of CIA and the Air Force in this field and it must be so clearly and explicitly stated that it can be understood by all parties.

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f. Problem of technical direction of aircraft. The principal issue here is the technical operation of the TAGBOARD. We are handling the contract and scheduling the production. TAGBOARD will be an Air Force tool--CIA has no interest in it that I know of. I see no reason whatsoever why the technical direction of that program should not be handled by the Air Force. In fact I think it would be a serious mistake for it to be handled in any other way. There is some lack of clarity in my mind as to what is our view on this, and for that reason it should be discussed.

Reviewed by
Director of D.I.
D.I. letter to
NRO - dated


JOHN A. McCONE

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 20 Sept
TO: [REDACTED]		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	
REMARKS: Mr. McCone handed this to Mr. Kirkpatrick and also sent a cc to Dr. Wheelon. Mr. Kirkpatrick has, in General Carter's absence, asked Dr. Wheelon to get started on it. [REDACTED]		
"EYES ONLY"		
FROM:		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

GPO: 1957-O-438445

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