

12 March 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : CORONA MURAL Program Configuration  
Control Board

In December, 1961 a decision was made by Dr. J. V. Charyk, then Under Secretary of the Air Force, to proceed with one engineering development model and five flight payloads of the dual camera convergent stereo configuration known as CORONA-MURAL. This decision was made following a meeting between CIA and Air Force people concerned with the CORONA program. The original CORONA payload was a single camera.

It must be remembered that at that time CORONA was still viewed as an interim short lived program soon to be replaced by a higher quality dual convergent stereo configuration (E-6) being developed as part of the overall SAMOS program. Also, prior to December, 1961, Air Force funds supported the entire CORONA program; "white" funding paid for THOR booster, AGENA vehicle, and related operational costs, "black" funds were transferred to CIA for camera payload and recovery capsule costs. Originally CIA-budgeted funds covered "black" contract costs.

By agreement between Dr. Charyk and Mr. R. M. Bissell, then DD/P, a fundamental change was made in contracts in the CORONA program at the same time that the MURAL variant was adopted. This contractual change stemmed from a governmental dissatisfaction with continually rising costs and an unfavorable record in reliability. Earlier, Lockheed had held a prime contract for the program with ITEK and General Electric as subcontractors. The contractual change made Lockheed, ITEK, and General Electric associate contractors.

In order to assure a smooth integration of all parts, THOR, AGENA, camera, and recovery capsule, Dr. Charyk held the view that a "system engineering and technical direction" function had to be clearly defined in the contract structure. This function had been fulfilled by [REDACTED] later by [REDACTED]

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in SAMOS and other programs. Rather than involve an all new group of people at that point in CORONA, it was then decided to assign this function to Lockheed by separate contract under Col. Lee Battle as program executive agent in Air Force Space Systems Division.

Unified governmental control by CIA and Air Force over Lockheed system engineering and technical direction activity was exerted by a concurrently established Configuration Control Board which passed upon all S.E.T.D. actions involving costs, schedules, or changes in contract scope. This Board was chaired by Capt. Johnson of Col. Battle's office in SSD, and included Col. Murphy, a CIA assigned operations officer for CORONA stationed in Palo Alto, and [redacted] assigned to CIA headquarters. [redacted] of the NRO staff was added to the membership later.

The Configuration Control Board introduced more formality and documentation into the program. Proposed technical changes were written in considerable detail by the Lockheed S.E.T.D. group and reviewed by Board members in between meetings held each 4 to 6 weeks when actions were taken.

It is my personal recollection that during the two great crises of the CORONA program subsequent to the establishment of this Board, i.e. the CORONA discharge fogging problem of 1962 and the radiation fogging problem beginning in July 1962, the engineering direction of the Configuration Control Board was largely pre-empted by Dr. Scoville on an ad hoc basis.

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Deputy Director, NRO

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