

HANDLE VIA [REDACTED] SYSTEM ONLY

NRO

SECRET



13 March 1965

Dear Breck:

This will acknowledge yours of March 11th concerning the frequency of CORONA missions.

I have agreed for the past year with the requirement of two successful CORONA buckets each month and I feel that NRO should hold this as an objective. However, for reasons discussed at USIB last Wednesday, there is a unanimous opinion of the Board, and certainly my very strong personal opinion, that there must be a reasonable gap between completion of one mission and the launching of a successive one in order to complete a preliminary readout of the photography and thus to program targets which evidence special interest resulting from such readout.

It would be most wasteful to pursue any other course and I am sure USIB will continue to support the position concerning the "gap" even though it would mean that the buckets of one month would not be readout until the first few days of the following month, as was the case in March.

I continue to feel that reliability is the most important factor and therefore hope that the "two buckets a month" directive to you from the Secretary of Defense and me will not be interpreted as meaning a launching should be undertaken in advance of thorough and careful inspection and check out of all systems to insure reliability.

I think the performance of the last 10 or 11 CORONAS was most commendable, and you and the entire NRO organization should be proud of the successes. The same might be said for the most

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recent [REDACTED] and the one that was successfully launched yesterday. With this in mind, I urge you to continue the practice of careful inspection and check out and I personally understand any delays such as those witnessed in the recent CORONA and [REDACTED] missions, when in the opinion of [REDACTED] and his staff delay was warranted in the interest of correcting defects and thus insuring success of the mission.

Sincerely,

/s/

John A. McCone
Director

cc: Secretary Vance # 2

Dr. Brockway McMillan
Director, MRO
Department of Defense
Washington, D. C.

JAM: [REDACTED]

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