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10 DEC 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: CORONA Management

1. In response to your request of 9 December, I have organized the following views on the CORONA management problem which McMillan is expected to bring to you in new form on 10 December at 3:30 p.m.
2. Let us assume that our sole criterion in judging McMillan's proposal is the efficient management of CORONA and the improved performance of the reconnaissance system itself. I feel that this central problem is confused if we simultaneously try to reinject CIA into the satellite reconnaissance business, even though this theme is very dear to my own heart.
3. Two things are clear from a candid review of the CORONA program history. First, it has been done quite differently from normal Air Force procurement and has relied on a small, well integrated group of people placing great reliance on the contractors. Second, the primary program responsibility used to be vested in Bissell and Ritland, but this has disappeared in recent years so that now there is, in fact, a vacuum at the top. The project office continues the day-to-day direction of the program just as it always did, but there is no real program director who is responsible to you or to McMillan.
4. McMillan proposes to fill this vacuum by naming [redacted] as the responsible officer to guide the affairs of the project office. This will give him someone to turn to and hold responsible for in the case of failures. It is also clear from our industrial feedback that the Air Force intends to substitute a far more elaborate and perhaps better disciplined project office and contractor

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structure for the present arrangement. The program will be run in a tidy but somewhat elaborate way along normal Air Force procurement patterns.

5. The real question in my mind is whether this solution will in fact produce improved performance in the CORONA system. I cannot persuade myself on the basis of what I know and hear of [redacted] organization that this will come to pass. Neither can I say that it will not. [redacted] organization has had a remarkable success with [redacted] to balance against its astounding failure with SAMOS. [redacted] himself will be the only new element in the management structure and I cannot imagine that he will be able to spend more than a fraction of his time on CORONA. The people responsible for the day-to-day help will continue to be the group under Col. Worthington, but perhaps enlarged. What we must count on is that the method of operation in [redacted] organization is such that the Worthington organization will function far more effectively in that context. The burden of demonstration seems clearly to rest on McMillan.

6. I cannot honestly support such a change without knowing in detail a great deal more about [redacted] capability and the way in which he would approach the problem, and this would require a searching visit to the West Coast on my own part. On the other hand, you may have enough confidence in McMillan and his convictions to make this change on his recommendation alone.

7. We had a general discussion on this problem with Tubini, McMillan, [redacted] and myself last week and were able to agree that some change in the management is required. A responsible individual needs to be designated for the CORONA program who is adequately supported by the staff, contractors and resources necessary to produce this program. This need can be

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filled in a variety of ways, one of which is represented by McMillan's proposal. We discussed the alternative ways of filling this basic need and it was abundantly clear that McMillan has fastened his attention and enthusiasm on the [REDACTED] solution.

Albert D. Wheelon

ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
(Science & Technology)

cc: DDCI

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