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17 NOV 1969

Mr. J. W. Plummer
Vice President and General Manager
Space Systems Division
Lockheed Missile and Space Center
Sunnyvale, California

Dear Jim,

Mission 1052-2, when successfully recovered on 7 October 1969, marked the conclusion of still another extremely valuable evolutionary phase within the confines of Project CORONA. Following the first successful recovery of film from an earth orbiting vehicle on 19 August 1960, the CORONA reconnaissance system has gone through several major evolutionary improvements, e.g., C, C', C'', C/M, J-1 and, finally, J-3.

This Program, as space reconnaissance pioneer, was the first to recover objects from earth orbit; the first to recover photographic information from orbit; the first, and to date the only, U.S. satellite-borne, panoramic, stereoscopic, reconnaissance system; the first to employ multiple re-entry vehicles on one mission; and the first satellite reconnaissance program to successfully complete more than 100 missions. Of greater significance, moreover, are the contributions from a technical and intelligence standpoint in challenging the unknown by establishing and advancing the "state-of-the-art" in photographic reconnaissance from orbiting satellites.

The CORONA Program has been applauded by many senior representatives of the U.S. Government and the National Security Council. President Johnson in 1967 told an audience that reconnaissance satellites are the single most important machines the U.S. ever built.

The CORONA system has dominated the satellite reconnaissance picture for more than a decade; and when history is compiled, it will record that Project CORONA conquered the initial technological problems of space reconnaissance, produced vital national intelligence and provided a sound foundation for the development of more advanced systems.

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The J-1 system served the national needs with distinction during the past six years. Its remarkable record is due to the outstanding efforts and dedication of those who participated in its development, production and operation. Those contractor personnel who have been associated with the program during the past decade have repeatedly demonstrated their professionalism and their capability to work with Government management to meet the needs of our national requirements. For all who had the opportunity to participate in such a very important program, I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation.

Sincerely,

7c/ [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
CORONA Program Director

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