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26 May 1961

PROJECT ARGON

Project ARGON is a joint Department of Defense/Central Intelligence Agency program. The primary objective of ARGON is the covert development and operational use of a camera system designed for simultaneous celestial and ground photography to obtain accurate geodetic coverage. This system will be used in a satellite incorporating a recoverable capsule.

Prior to initiation of ARGON the U. S. Army was seeking Department of Defense approval for a program of this nature known as Project APOLLO. Originally it was planned to limit ARGON to four shots. However, it was determined the job could not be done with this number and approval was received for two additional shots plus one engineering shot making a grand total of seven ARGON shots. A resume of the current status of ARGON and plans and objectives for 1961 is set forth below.

I. PRESENT ACTIVITIES

At the present time there are four ARGON shots to be scheduled. It is anticipated shot #3 will be fired 6 June 1961 with the remaining three to be fired prior to 1 December 1961.

The ARGON program can be placed in two categories: R&D and Operational.

A. Research & Development

The major portion of the R&D effort is conducted by members of private industry and CIA. The Air Force and DOD afford limited support and technical guidance.

1. Industry

There are currently 5 companies involved in Project ARGON: LMSD, EK and [REDACTED] are prime contractors. FCIC and GE are subcontractors to LMSD. Each of the above companies has a representative group of personnel who are fully cognizant of CIA participation in ARGON.

In order to effectuate a sound security program within industry, the Security Officer, Project Headquarters has established procedures governing clearances, communications, briefings, cover and physical security. Responsibility for implementing these procedures has been delegated to CIA Security Officers assigned to the company or to the company security officer.

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In Accordance with E. O. 12958

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a. Clearances

An ARGON clearance is the prerequisite for access to ARGON data, materials or facilities.

ARGON clearances are granted by CIA only, and all requests are submitted to ARGON Headquarters in writing. Each request must contain sufficient justification and be accompanied by two legible copies of Personnel Security Questionnaire (DD-48) and 1 copy of Certificate of Non-Affiliation (DD-48-1). The only acceptable justification for clearance is a need to know and material contribution to the program.

An IBM listing of all ARGON clearances, both active and inactive, is maintained at ARGON Headquarters. All queries regarding ARGON clearance status of supplier personnel are submitted to Project Headquarters. Each supplier is furnished an IBM listing of its own employees.

Certification of an individuals ARGON clearance status may be certified by ARGON Headquarters only.

There are currently 2000 individuals holding active ARGON clearance with approximately 1500 falling into the industrial complex.

There are two categories of ARGON clearances, the highest being Category I and the lowest being Category V.

b. Briefings

ARGON briefings fall into two categories consistent with ARGON clearances. A Category I briefing depending upon the "need-to-know" authorizes an individual knowledge of sponsorship and mission. A Category V briefing encompasses all information, except sponsor, that is necessary for an individual to perform adequately.

All briefings are conducted by the designated security officer within supplier facilities.

c. Communications

At the present time 4 signal centers have been established within industry. Supplier personnel have been trained in the operation of TWX equipment by CIA communications personnel.





Unlisted telephones have been installed in supplier facilities as a security measure. Suppliers have been briefed as to the use of telephones in the conduct of ARGON business.'

d. Physical security

At the time of initial contact with a supplier a security inspection is conducted and a security program is established. The supplier implements the program and follow-up visits are made at 6-month intervals. When construction of secure areas and signal centers are completed a technical security inspection is conducted.

e. Cover

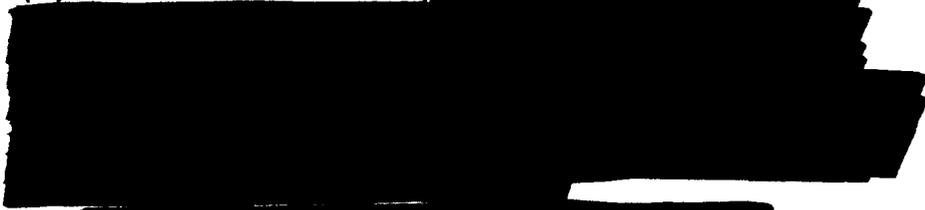
Since the inception of ARGON we have used the Discoverer satellite series as a cover. Prior to each launch the DFD Cover Officer prepares a cover story for publication.

f. Contractors

There are 5 major contractors engaged in the ARGON effort. (1) Lockheed Missile Systems Division, Lockheed Aircraft Corporation is a prime contractor for the ARGON program. LMSD developed the second stage AGENA which is used in the ARGON program. Assembly of the complete recoverable capsule is accomplished

The entire building is a secure area and is under the cognizance of Mr. [redacted] a CIA Security Officer permanently assigned to the project. There are approximately 250 cleared personnel in the LMSD complex and approximately 70 in process for clearance.

(2) The Eastman Kodak Co., [redacted]



(3) [redacted] will be engaged in working on the results of the mission. It is their responsibility to correlate all readout data and to come up with a final product of a world grid. This grid will be used in correcting present maps and charts used by military services and private industry.

Mr. [REDACTED], a CIA security officer, has been permanently assigned to the [REDACTED] on Project ARGON. The entire building is a secure area and the work area for ARGON is a secure area within this. Our alternate security contact is Mr. [REDACTED]. At the present time there are 72 ARGON cleared personnel with 55 meeting T standards. These 55 persons will have access to the ARGON area and will work on the material. The remaining personnel have ARGON clearances and fall into the administrative and maintenance categories.

(4) The General Electric Co., Philadelphia, Pa. designed and manufactured the recoverable capsule. This is the same capsule used on the "white" Discoverer shots, however, certain modifications are made in a secure area at GE. Mr. [REDACTED], GE security officers, are our primary contacts. There are approximately 260 ARGON cleared personnel at GE.

(5) The Fairchild Camera and Instrument Co., Syosset, New York fabricated and designed the ARGON camera. All work has been conducted in a secure area. Our principle security contact at FCIC is Mr. [REDACTED]. There are approximately 260 ARGON cleared personnel at FCIC.

2. Government

While there are many ARGON cleared personnel in various components of the U. S. Government major contributions are made to the program by CIA, DOD and the Air Force.

Within CIA, DPD-DD/P is responsible for management of the program. Specific responsibilities are delegated to the components of DPD (i.e., Contracts, Finance, Development, Operations, Logistics and Security).

The Air Force effort is being conducted by 2 main components. [REDACTED] under the Command of Brig. Gen. Richard Curtin, is responsible for management of ARGON as pertains to the AF. The Space Systems Division (formerly BMD) is charged with the actual operational aspects of ARGON. Our primary contacts are [REDACTED] and Col. Paul Worthman or Lt/Col Ralph Ford, SSD. It will be well to note that the latter two officers are most efficient, cooperative and conscientious regarding their responsibilities. DOD has certain managerial responsibilities for ARGON and the Army Map Service provides much technical guidance.

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The remaining Government agencies have a "need to know," however, they do not make a direct contribution to the program. These agencies are Army, Navy, Executive Offices and the Department of State.

B. Operational

All Operational aspects of ARGON are conducted by the Air Force and CIA.

CIA has security officers on site at Vandenberg Air Force Base at time of launch and at the recovery area in Hawaii during the entire period the vehicle is in orbit and until it has been recovered. Mr. [REDACTED] is at VAFB and Mr. [REDACTED] is in [REDACTED]. When the capsule is returned to the West Coast, the film is removed and transported [REDACTED] a CIA security officer.

The Air Force SSD is responsible for launch, tracking and recovery phases of the operation.

II. PLANS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 1961

The major plans and objectives for 1961 are as follows:

A. Completion of the operational aspects of the ARGON program by 1 January 1962.

B. Obtain the schedule for the remaining ARGON shots.

C. Levy requirements for security officers at time of each launch. One man to VAFB, 1 man to Hawaii and 1 courier to escort film from San Francisco, Calif. [REDACTED]

D. Debriefing of all personnel who are not making a direct contribution to the program.