

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~EYES ONLY~~



3 September 1959

Mr. Roy W. Johnson
Director, Advanced Research Projects Agency
Department of Defense
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Recent information which I have received about the Argon Project compels me to urge you to review at the earliest possible date the satellite mapping program to determine whether the present objectives are adequate to meet urgent military requirements and whether the technical approach is capable of achieving these objectives.

Broadly speaking, Argon embraces a program of accurately mapping the world through the establishment of a new controlled grid of the earth's surface. As you know, however, the Air Force is faced with the problem of linking the Soviet target complex to known geodetic control points for our ballistic missile systems. In order to make both the IRBM and ICBM fully operational weapon systems, these data are needed now. It is important that Argon be conducted in a way which will meet these specific missile targeting objectives. I believe that the SAMOS mapping sub-system (E-4) offers a solution to the missile targeting problem and would be a desirable adjunct to the Argon Project.

There are two additional factors which bear on this program. The first is security control. The fact that Argon will introduce four new firings in the Discoverer series while at the same time the four known SAMOS flights are now cancelled complicates the cover plan for the sensitive phases of Discoverer. The second factor is the possible interference with the proposed Corona shots that are due to be launched in 1960. The data from the Corona series is vital to the IRBM and ICBM targeting problem. Any adverse effect on the Corona program should be avoided.

An early massive deterrent capability will be possible only if an adequate satellite mapping program is able to meet our time-wise

~~EYES ONLY~~
~~TOP SECRET~~

Declassified and Released by the N R O
In Accordance with E. O. 12958
on NOV 26 1997

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~EYES ONLY~~

and technical requirements for ballistic missiles. I would like to recommend, therefore, that a small group be assembled by you to review the Argon Project and to consider reinstatement of the E-4 Program. I have discussed this matter with Dr. Charyk. Both he and I would be available on Wednesday, 9 September, at 1100 hours. In addition, I would like to suggest [REDACTED] be invited to attend. I will make available an ARDC technical team to brief you on the E-4 program and to outline how it can be used to assist in accomplishing Argon objectives as well as provide the data essential to the urgent requirements of the ballistic missile operational program.

Sincerely,

B. A. SCHRIEVER
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander

cc:

[REDACTED]
Mr. Bissell

~~EYES ONLY~~
~~TOP SECRET~~