

[REDACTED]
21 October 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Trip Report - CORONA Meeting, 14-16 October 1959

Mr. Kiefer, [REDACTED] and I attended meetings in Palo Alto on 14-15 October. Mr. Kiefer and I went on to BMD for further meetings on 16 October.

MEETINGS IN PALO ALTO

1. Shepherd Committee: The main purpose of this meeting was to re-convene the special Shepherd Committee (Battle, Kiefer, Shepherd, Plummer, O'Green, Levison and [REDACTED] of GE, others present including Ed Green and [REDACTED]. The Committee was briefed by an Itek IG review group headed by their head research man, [REDACTED] on the results of its two week review of the project as managed by Walt Levison. In briefest summary the Committee concluded from this rather barren review and from other reports as follows:

a. Investigation as to the cause of the film failure is inconclusive.

b. Further testing of film and camera operation should be conducted at the Avco and Bemco high altitude chambers with particular emphasis on the issue of brittleness of the film at high altitude. Cameras numbers 9 and 12 should be used initially, but the testing would be broadened to cover all available cameras as soon as possible.

c. Re-entry problems should continue to be investigated with particular emphasis on the reliability of the rockets.

d. The committee accepted the following specific fixes for the next flight:

- (1) 10 pounds of 113C film
- (2) Leader - A minimum of 4 wraps on supply spool when ready for liftoff.
- (3) High temperature armature in cassette motor.
- (4) Flanged exit roller.
- (5) Full radiation shield over film path.
- (6) Proven light tight ablative shell.
- (7) Approved recovery body heaters.
- (8) Additional camera instrumentation.
- (9) Torque motor on supply for hold down during ascent phase.
- (10) Modified guillotine and light seal.
- (11) Cut away foam in recovery bucket.

e. Having operated successfully in two Ramco chamber tests under simulated conditions (it is the only camera to have succeeded) it was decided to fly camera number 10 on target date of 27 October unless the committee decided prior to firing that the intervening tests surfaced problems which would make this inadvisable.

2. Acceptance of payload: By delegation BMD has been accepting the payloads for us from LMSD. In view of our more active technical participation in the program through the Shepherd Committee and in view of the Conway report submitted recently relative to LMSD readiness procedures, it was agreed by BMD and LMSD that [redacted] assisted by an officer designated by BMD, would accept the payloads on the next two flights. In doing so [redacted] will go beyond the requirements of a purely legal acceptance and, to the extent possible, ensure that all fixes agreed upon have, in fact, been properly made and that the camera and film transported are properly operating prior to launch. On the next flight [redacted] will be joined by Mr. Green to review the film handling procedures at Vandenberg prior to the flight.

b. Role of Colonel Murphy: It was agreed by Messrs. [redacted] and Plummer that Colonel Murphy might be of more assistance to LMSD and ourselves if in addition to his other duties he:

a. Assume the [redacted] reporting responsibility and by cable twice a week give us a detailed report as to technical developments.

b. Become familiar with the problems surrounding acceptance to the end that he rather than [redacted] perform acceptance on our behalf during the 1960 program.

4. Cost of Fixes: [redacted] and [redacted] advised that through October probably all black extra costs incurred as a result of the failures could be absorbed in the present funding of the 1959 CORONA program. However, likely on about 1 November overruns would start occurring and the question was raised for Mr. Kelly's attention as to whether these overruns should be picked up in the 1960 CORONA prime contract or charged as overruns to the 1959 program. (Since that time we have learned that Itel has to date an additional overrun of approximately [redacted] in the 1959 program.)

MEETINGS AT BMD

b. The following matters were covered at BMD with Colonel [redacted] and Colonel Oler:

a. Organization: The organization of BMD as it affects CORONA was reviewed as shown by the attached chart.

B. CORONA Scheduling Questions:

- (1) Turn around times have not been improved sufficiently to permit the scheduling of more than 2 shots per month during 1960.
- (2) The bio-med shots can be and are scheduled for December 1959 and January 1960.
- (3) The new GE Mark III ablative shell (substitution of nylon for plastic) will probably not be used. If it is adopted its testing will be accomplished in regular CORONA shots.
- (4) The improved Agena will probably be available in March, for operational use in April.

CONTINUATION OF SHEPHERD COMMITTEE

It was agreed that this would be continued on an informal basis until after the next firing and at that time a recommendation would be made to Mr. Bissell and to General Ritland as to its future role.

At the end of the day we had a brief meeting with General Ritland at which the present status of the program was reviewed.


Chief, Developments Branch
DPD-2D/P


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