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28 March 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Corona-M on Seven-Day Stand-by

1. Awaiting your return is a disagreement between Defense on the one side and CIA and State on the other as to whether the Corona in stand-by reserve should be dispatched on a seven-day basis in view of the failure of one last week.

2. You will recall that I mentioned to you on Wednesday that the shot on the previous day had failed. I don't believe I mentioned to you the fact that I had asked Wheelon to talk to McMillan about the possibility of delaying that shot in order that it could be reprogrammed to take advantage of the excellent coverage that we have recently obtained. It was the unanimous view of the Agency that the shot would be much more valuable if its program could reflect the coverage that has recently been obtained and be directed toward those areas that had not been recently covered. Wheelon talked to McMillan about this and McMillan refused to delay the shot, first on the basis that there was too little time remaining before its scheduled launch, and secondly, because he felt it would produce valuable R&D information. The shot went into the ocean so it is a total loss.

3. COMOR met this week and recommended that the seven-day stand-by be used. CIA and State dissented on the basis that more time should be taken until the shot could be reprogrammed against recent coverage.

4. I called [REDACTED] on this and raised the above questions. He took the very strong view that we should put in motion the activation of the seven-day stand-by. His argument was that this was important for search, and he felt that the programming for the shot would automatically cover those areas which had not been previously covered. On the basis of [REDACTED] views, I alerted NRO to start preparing the shot, but upon strong representation from Eugene Kiefer about the difficulties in getting all of the necessary personnel to work on the Easter weekend, I told him

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a Monday start would be satisfactory. In the meantime this will give us the opportunity to get your views and your decision as to what you think is desirable.

5. [REDACTED] feels very strongly that under the present system the seven-day stand-by would not be as productive as it would if it could be completely reprogrammed on the basis of present gains. He also reported that on Thursday last when Mac Bundy was briefed by Lundahl on the last [REDACTED] shot, Bundy was raising some very basic questions as to the value of the program, the method of tasking the operation, etc.

*L. B. K.*

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick  
Executive Director

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