

Dear Cy:

This letter will acknowledge your memorandum, undated and received on 23 October, proposing that CORONA mission J-1014, scheduled to launch approximately 10 November or a few days thereafter, be programmed on a nine-day-synchronous/eight-day-equally-spaced orbit and thus give complete coverage of Cuba without serious reservation of the coverage of Soviet Union and Communist China.

I have submitted your letter to the United States Intelligence Board and they expressed no objection to this programming of CORONA mission J-1014 as they feel it will demonstrate the contribution that KH-4 photography can make to intelligence collection of Cuba. However, without objecting to the proposed mission, the Board directed that I point out to you the following problems:

1. The success of the nine-day-synchronous mission in the present CORONA system depends on both recoveries being successful. The increased coverage of both Sino-Soviet targets and the Cuban targets approximately outweighs this disadvantage in a statistical sense, so it is our view that you come out about even.
2. The eight-day mission requires favorable weather over the individual targets, whereas the normal double four-day mission provides repetitive coverage on the same targets approximately four days apart. This gives a substantial level on the cloud problem.
3. A minor point is the overlap between the two kinds of missions. Overlapping coverage of the same target is possible only at greater obliquities (22-44 degrees), whereas the double four-day missions tend to provide overlapping at an average obliquity of 22 degrees.

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on NOV 26 1997

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4. There is also a problem of the hour of the day when Cuban coverage is achieved if normal daylight photography of the Soviet Union is achieved, and its inter-relationship with the late afternoon occurrence of clouds over Cuba. Our people have not examined this in detail, but point out that the choices cannot be made independently and that the necessary choices probably interact strongly with weather.

Sincerely,

J. A. McCone

John A. McCone
Director

The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance
Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C.

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Distribution of [REDACTED] dtd 28 Oct 64

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