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10 February 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Special Projects

SUBJECT: CORONA Weekly Report, 6-10 February

7-9 February

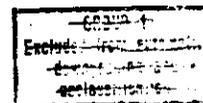
Webb attended PET activities for 1038 at NPIC. Reports from other sources notwithstanding, Mission 1038 was a typical February mission producing generally degraded photography due to extensive snow cover, ice fog, and lousy weather. There is no evidence that the collection system could not have produced better had the atmospheric factors been more favorable. There are examples of photography in both portions of mission that are as good as any the system has taken from comparable altitude. Sadly, these examples do not appear very often. Whatever was wrong on this mission will be fixed in April and May, will go bad again in July and August and will be fixed again in October and November. We have enough samples in the CORONA program to enable us to predict general performance through seasonal variations in atmospheric transparency.

The Dash Two bucket was processed and duplicated at AFSPPL [redacted]. There was no evidence that the original negatives suffered from [redacted] processing. The quality of the [redacted] duplicates was sometimes poor. From interviews with [redacted] and NPIC personnel, it took almost superhuman effort to perform the task at SPPL. [redacted] own representation suggests that they not do another actual mission exercise until its personnel strength is up enough to insure minimal risk. If SPPL

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In Accordance with E. O. 12958

on NOV 26 1997



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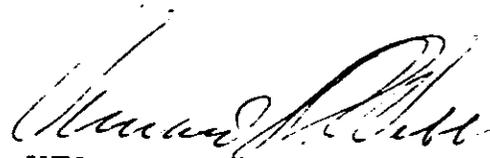
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is to remain as the back-up processing site, the CIA should insist that SPPL be permitted to recruit, train, and freeze sufficient personnel to confidently take on the task. They could not have accomplished 1038-2 as well as they did without the heavy personnel augmentation from [REDACTED]. SPPL should continue with ORI and the exercise should be extended to include all phases from O-neg. processing to all-priorities duplication.

After the PET activities adjourned, NPIC briefed on its work with the low gamma experiment. The plan for PI evaluation was presented. My observations and evaluation of selected test material have done little except strengthen the belief that any given target under any given environment has its own requirement for exposure, processing, and printing and that no one process represents the best for all cases. Intuitively I feel that the low gamma original negative represents the best compromise in that it will retain more of the information exposed to it than will the higher gamma conventional method. Neither the chemistry nor the machinery has been developed to handle the volume of film exposed by the CORONA system. While NPIC pursues its investigation to learn whether or not low gamma does indeed give a better overall product, I have instructed [REDACTED] and ITEK to develop a proposal for handling large amounts of film should the decision to go operational on low gamma be favorable.

Forecast Activities:

[REDACTED] has requested Webb be present for operational duty during Mission 1039.


VERNARD H. WEBB
SA/C/OSP

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