

~~TOP SECRET~~ CORONA

HANDLE VIA
BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

~~TS~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. FLAX

VIA: GENERAL BERG AND MR. REBER

SUBJECT: CORONA ASSOCIATED SPACE DEBRIS



We have investigated two reportings of space debris impact from the standpoint of possible association with the orbital decay of the Corona Mission 1041 Agena, estimated by NORAD to have occurred at 1249Z, 13 July+ or - 5 minutes at 93.8°W-43.3°N (approximately Detroit, Michigan). You will recall my memorandum to you of 17 July (see Tab A) related to this subject.

The "space debris" reported to have impacted near Detroit, which was the subject of Detroit newspaper articles on 14 July, has been determined to have been an escape hatch from a lightweight, private aircraft, probably of North American manufacture (see Tab B including photograph). Why the Detroit Free Press assumed that this object was space program associated on the very day that NORAD had predicted decay of Corona 1041 Agena in the vicinity of Detroit, I regret, completely escapes my comprehension.

We also investigated the possibility that space debris reported to have fallen near [redacted] (see Tab C) might also have been associated with the 1041 orbital decay event. A subsequent report describes this object as a metal sphere, apparently titanium, designed to contain gas under pressure, approximately two feet in diameter, fifty-two inches in circumference. Whereas this might be: (1) a nitrogen freon gas bottle associated with agena stabilization or (2) a helium gas bottle associated with agena engine pressurization, it is more probably a titanium gas storage sphere from a Titan III C upper stage, which re-entered on 7 February 1967 after launching seven communications satellites. A similar object discovered 7 February near [redacted] has already been returned

(b)(1)
(b)(3)

HANDLE VIA
BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

~~TOP SECRET~~ CORONA
EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC REGRADING
DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

WORKING PAPER
CONTROL NO Internal
COPY _____ OF _____ COPIES
PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES

~~TOP SECRET~~ CORONA

HANDLE VIA
BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

to the United States. There is in fact some question based upon reports received related to the more recent object, as to whether impact was actually observed on 13 July or whether the object was merely found on that date. It is interesting to note however that both the object discovered in February and the object discovered in July show evidences of having been subjected to technical examination and analysis, apparently by [redacted]

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

As an additional item for your information, the agena associated with Corona mission 1042 was predicted by NORAD for orbital decay at 0121Z 20 July + or - two minutes at [redacted]. There was visual confirmation of the re-entry by four commercial aircraft. This office took no action with respect to this event and there have been no subsequent reports.

(b)(1)

(b)(3)

Recommendation: No action is required. This is merely for your information.

Louis F. Mazza
LOUIS F. MAZZA
Asst for Security
NRO Staff

WORKING PAPERS

HANDLE VIA
BYEMAN
CONTROL SYSTEM

~~TOP SECRET~~ CORONA
EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC REGRADING
DOD DIRECTIVE 5200.10 DOES NOT APPLY

CONTROL NO Internal
COPY _____ OF _____ COPIES
PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES