

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
cy # 1, CIA Series C
October 31, 1969

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Dear Johnny:

It has come to my attention that you are in the process of organizing a panel under the chairmanship of Gene Fubini to look into the technologies associated with satellite readout systems. Since this is closely related to some activities the Land Panel has had under way for some months, I am concerned about duplication of effort, the resultant burden placed on the agencies and their contractors, and most importantly the prospect of presenting EXCOM with uncorrelated advice from two or more outside groups.

The EXCOM, of course, has made some specific decisions in this particular area and, since I and the Land Panel feel a special obligation to the Committee in regard to technical questions before it, we are continuing the reviews that we began last spring. In particular, Dr. Land and his panel will continue to concentrate on readout technology during the next few months in order to support the EXCOM with advice on those issues relevant to the next decision points that the Committee has scheduled for itself. To this end, it will pay close attention to the transducers and associated optics in order to give EXCOM an assessment of technical progress and readiness for development. We are assuming, as EXCOM has, that sometime early next year the results of experimental programs at [redacted] will provide sufficient data to allow us to reassess the appropriateness of the high priority EXCOM has given the solid state system. We will therefore follow these programs closely. At the same time, we will follow progress and review the merits of the [redacted] currently funded as a back-up in case the solid state does not progress promisingly.

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2

The problem, of course, is that we now have two panels covering the same areas. Since I know you and I share the common concern about overloading the operating agencies and their contractors who already have a full-time job on their hands, I think we should try to mitigate the additional burden of another group working in this area. As a means of doing this, let me suggest that members of your panel join our Land Panel subgroups for contractor visits and briefings. Dr. Garwin, having just returned from Europe, will resume his work as head of Dr. Land's subgroup on transducers, and Drs. Shea and Baker will continue to review the optical system design and technology and the other spacecraft components.

This situation, however, raises a broader issue of how we should provide outside technical advice to the EXCOM on NRO matters. The Land Panel was, of course, organized specifically for this purpose in 1965 by the Science Adviser when the EXCOM was established and has functioned in that capacity since then. In view of the interagency interest in these programs, this still seems to be the most appropriate way to provide this support and I think it would be unwise for EXCOM to allow the activation of ad hoc advisory groups duplicating this activity without its express approval. Since it is only natural that, on particularly important or controversial issues, each of the participating organizations might like to sponsor advisory groups of its own, one can imagine situations where three or four separate panels might be reviewing the same problem. I think that this would be more likely to confuse than to clarify an issue and that a single representative panel can be far more effective and useful to the Committee.

Of course, for the Land Panel to fill this role, it is essential that you, John McLucas and the EXCOM members feel comfortable that the Panel has the breadth of view to cover all the interests in whatever problem is at hand. To this end, I and Dr. Land will welcome suggestions about additional consultants or members that might be added to accomplish this purpose. We will also continue to invite staff members of all interested parties to our meetings and seek

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3

their comments and views about the issues under consideration or about additional lines of investigation to be pursued.

To sum up, there is no question that the EXCOM will profit by all the technical assistance it can get. At the same time, we should try to make this advice as coherent as possible. I think this can best be done by relying on the Land Panel supplemented when necessary by additional people to meet particular program needs or special agency interests.

Sincerely,

Lee

Lee A. DuBridge
Science Adviser

The Honorable John S. Foster, Jr.
Director of Defense Research & Engineering
Department of Defense
Washington, D. C.

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