

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

December 10, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Management of CORONA Project

In accordance with our discussion of 27 November 1963, I request that the proposed memorandum to Directors of NRO Programs A and B forwarded to you on 28 October on this subject under ~~10025~~ 5536-03 be returned. I am submitting herewith a revised proposed directive that more clearly defines the assignment of responsibilities for the conduct of the CORONA Program. To summarize this directive briefly, to Director, Program A, it assigns responsibility for: projecting vehicle and payload requirements and launch schedules, based on DMO guidance developed in response to USIB requirements; directive control for launch, orbital and recovery operations, in accordance with detailed procedures already in effect; technical direction to contractors for day to day engineering, and for minor product improvements exclusive of major developments, making use of the advice and recommendations of the CCU and of all the technical resources of the NRO; contractual direction of CORONA contracts through a CIA contracting officer to be assigned to the Program A staff; programming, budgeting, and progress reporting on all assigned projects.

As you will recall, a meeting with General Carter, Mr. Whelan, and Mr. Cross took place on 7 November for the purpose of reviewing possibilities of further integration of DCD and CIA resources into the NRO. As a result of that meeting, I am now preparing a memorandum to you that will identify certain positions within both the NRO Staff and the Office of Director, Program A, that I believe should be manned by technically qualified individuals with CIA experience. This memorandum will be forwarded soon.

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THIS MESSAGE DOES NOT APPLY



One subject touched on briefly during our meeting on 27 November was that of assigning responsibilities within the NRO for advanced technical planning of major system or component developments, as distinct from minor product improvements on systems already assigned to appropriate Program Directors. This function is important in determining the most promising avenues of study and development if we are to continue to improve our national reconnaissance capability.

I share your concern that we must make maximum use of the initiative, imagination, and technical capabilities of all agencies and resources available to us. The concept I propose recognizes that each Program Director must have a small office of highly qualified individuals engaged in advanced planning in relation to his assigned projects. I would expect him to use this office to assist him in his assigned responsibilities for improvements to the systems in his care, and also for developing recommendations for new studies or development tasks. These he would act upon or forward to the DNRO as he judges their importance and scope.

In the staff of the NRO, I propose a small Advanced Planning Office manned by individuals of the highest qualifications we can command. This office would be responsible, under direction of the DNRO, for planning the whole content of the advanced development program of the NRO. I am in the process now of developing detailed guidance for the conduct of this function. It is already clear that the group must be responsible: for review and analysis of projects already in being, and of proposals received from Program Directors; for insuring that all technical resources available to the NRO contribute effectively to shaping of the program; and for developing the criteria, and assembling the information, upon which decisions for major new developments can rationally be based.

Responsibility for initiating major developments or developments directed toward new capabilities will remain with the DNRO, subject to the policies and guidance of the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence as provided for in the

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agreement of 13 March 1963. Responsibility for execution of such developments will be assigned by DNRD. I expect that many study efforts in support of the advanced planning function will be set as tasks by the DNRD upon the Program Directors and upon other IOD and CIA organizations not formally in the NRO.

The proposed directive attached hereto sets up an authoritative operating management for the CORONA project under the kind of structure that I have just outlined. It retains for the DNRD approval authority over all major changes or new developments; it does not delegate to the Director, Program A, exclusive responsibility to plan such changes or developments; and it retains for the DNRD the authority to execute changes or developments through the agencies of his choice. In order that we may proceed with the urgent task of clarifying the operating management of the CORONA project, within the framework of the objectives that were discussed in our 27 November meeting, your cooperation in concurring with the attached directive will be appreciated.

Brockway McMillan
Director
National Reconnaissance Office

Attachment

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Control System

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