

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

12 February 1964

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Brockway McMillan
Director, NRO**

Attached is a copy of my notes of the discussion we had yesterday morning. I think the notes accurately reflect our conversation although no attempt was made to discuss in detail the complications of the proposed organization arrangements for the CORONA project.

It is important that agreement be reached in memorandum form concerning the future before there is further disturbance of existing outstanding contracts and management responsibilities of the CIA.

I am prepared to meet at any time to agree upon such a memorandum and to subsequently discuss it with Secretary McNamara.

J. W.
JOHN A. McCONE
Director

Attachment

11 February 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Dr. McMillan on 11 February 1964

Dr. McMillan stated he desired to review with me the information given to the Clifford Board. He proceeded then to discuss an elaborate organization chart designed to show the complexities of the present management arrangements for the CORONA project.

Without attempting to discuss the chart in detail, it is apparent that the Thor booster (Douglas), the standard Agena D (Lockheed), modifications of Agena D (Lockheed 162) and the launching services and operations (6595 ATW Vandenberg) and the on-orbit control and recovery (6954 ATW Sunnyvale) are under the control of General Greer.

The camera (ITEK), reentry vehicle (General Electric), the payload superstructure and its integration with the camera and reentry vehicle (Lockheed, Sunnyvale SK) are contracts under the control of CIA.

A technical Committee coordinates the work of these various contractors but is limited because of provisions calling for unanimous consent.

NOTE: I stated that no Committee should have such authority. The final judgment of what should be done, when and how, should be made by an individual after receiving advice of committees, specialists, etc.

McMillan then turned to a new plan of organization, the effect of which was to center all of the above functions under General Greer who has collateral responsibility for the Thor and Agena. General Greer would have an operating director [in the procurement division.] The procurement division would assume responsibility for all contracts for CORONA M&J projects.

I stated that the present arrangement seemed cumbersome. It had grown that way because the Air Force had refused to develop the CORONA but had insisted on developing the more sophisticated SAMOS and hence CIA undertook the job and this got them into the business of buying cameras, recon vehicles, etc. The moving of the operational center from CIA to NRO had complicated things and in fact the setup which made sense originally did not fit comfortably into the NRO concept. I then made the following points, briefed in the attached memo copy of which I gave to McMillan:

1. It seemed logical that there should be a fully integrated organization under competent management to provide all necessary management functions including procurement, supervision of contractors, scheduling and operations of a proven article. CORONA was a proven article (although the J was still somewhat doubtful), and I would like to see such an organization established forthwith.

NOTE: With respect to procurement, I thought it might be well for the project to have CIA procurement officers, administrators and security personnel who would issue CIA contracts because secrecy was respected under these circumstances and not with Air Force contracts. This however did not change the authority of the project manager.

2. In addition to all else the management organization had to be equipped with a technical division which could make improvements to the proven article which would increase its utility and most particularly its dependability. These I envisaged would be routine types of engineering improvements which would evolve from the system engineering components and the purpose of which would be to provide a more dependable CORONA system producing more useful results.

NOTE: The management of the CORONA project envisaged in 1. and 2. above would schedule operations to meet the needs of USIB and its COMOR Subcommittee. USIB would have the final say on requirements.

3. Outside and apart from the above management organization would be a sophisticated technical organization charged with the responsibility to study, recommend and to effectively carry out by contracts and otherwise extensive advancements in the system designed to get the maximum product. I spoke of research of the type discussed Saturday afternoon, the necessity of having every frame equal the best frame, the need to "milk the system dry" by improved film, film intensifiers and a variety of other scientific and engineering innovations designed to perfect the system.

I said that these changes should not be injected into the operations of the "proven devices" because they would involve such extensive changes that the system would revert to the R&D phase, therefore when we were ready to go with these innovations, we could consider how to introduce them into the system without jeopardizing schedules considered essential from an intelligence requirements point of view.

4. Developing a new system designed to give better resolution than can possibly be obtained from the CORONA system.

NOTE: I said that it appeared to me that 3. and 4. should be assigned by D/NRO to CIA who should use all of its resources to accomplish these two objectives as promptly as possible and with as little interference to the operation of the proven system as possible.

5. A Board of technical advisers should be established by the D/NRO composed of men engaged in 2. above and those engaged in 3. and 4. above and they should be charged with the responsibility of seeing that there are no overlaps or gaps, and with advising the D/NRO on steps which should be taken. This Board should meet as frequently as necessary and should consider the broad spectrum of problems which arise in implementing the above.

Dr. McMillan did not object to the above. He feels there is a good deal of sophistication in the Air Force as evidenced by the successful development. He also indicated the difficulty of differentiating between 2. and 3. above.

I stated if the above procedure were adopted and adhered to, then I thought that the resources in both CIA and Air Force could contribute to the success of our reconnaissance program. Any plan which did not utilize the resources of both organizations would not be agreeable to me. I took the occasion to tell Dr. McMillan I remained convinced that he, as Under Secretary, is making a mistake to attempt to run a line organization because of his varied statutory responsibilities from which he could not escape and for that reason I urged he consider some different "in-house" arrangement for directing the NRO.

... could be done by the CTR management and such operation on a joint advanced planning function
JAM/mfb *reporting to the D/NRO man of current problems*
- 3 - would be solved.

Orig - DCI
1 - Dr. McMillan, D/NRO

11 February 1964

- 1. Complete organization plan for the operation of a proven article.**
- 2. Arrange tech organ to make improvements to the proven article to increase its utility and dependability (1 and 2 under one mgt.)**
- 3. Arrange sophisticated tech organ to study, recommend and effect by contracts and otherwise improvements to get max. product from (1).**
- 4. Develop a new system**
- 5. Board of tech. advisors.**