Memo For Record

Subject: Discoverer

17 April 1959

A briefing was presented to the following officials on this date:

Major Jim Elder         Col. C.C. Andrews
Capt. Fred Stem          Col. J.C. Henry
Capt. John Watson        LD. F.O. Dillion
Capt. J.C. Boushay        Lt. R.D. Trow
Capt. Bill Green          Maj. Donald Floyd
Mr. L.C. Mayer

1. Col. Evans covered the background of the Discoverer program which included the consideration for 17 Tote 1176 packages. This was subsequently reduced to 13 tones to include 3 diametral payloads, two engineering tests and 8 Corona payloads. The CIO would procure the Corona payloads, handle White House approval and weather and process the output of the 8 shots.

2. With the proposed addition it would allow for a total of 17 shots in CY 59, with the remainder in CY 60. The addition
would include 12 shots of the same type of package as the original Corona. This would total only at 25. BMD has authority to procure 19 Thors and requests authority for 6 in addition. Thor-1175 was payload.

4. BMD requires a cover plan for the additional 12 shots and claims that this is urgent to the attention of the people preparing the caring cover plan.

5. Discussion started on the possible use of the last four shots for Discoverer. The Arpa-Army mapping and charting satellite. Nothing firm on this as it is more akin a rumor phase. As a result of this discussion, Mr. Bourdage asked Intelligence to substantiate their claim by more facts regarding their position in a memo to ARPA that more target information is required instead of mapping as the present mapping and charting data is sufficient for this time being in view of the CEP error of the existing missile. Such a paper will be prepared by Intelligence.
6. The advisability of the Air Force taking over the program from Corona shot #9 was discussed. Dr. Watson would prefer the Air Force to handle the operational weather data, White House approval, output from Corona, and grand processing equipment.

It was rumored that the President had made a decision on the follow-on program; it was agreed to investigate Dr. Watson's position after the approval paper was received.