

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY

May 28, 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Mr. McCone - May 28, 1964

The meeting opened with a brief discussion of the proposal to put the CORONA camera in the G.E. vehicle. Mr. McCone indicated a generally favorable view. I said that the decision must depend on a careful study of costs.

I then reported briefly on the two recent failures of the CORONA system and on the actions that General Greer had taken under my direction to insure adequate investigation of them. I described briefly the findings and the steps that are being taken to remedy the problems in the AGENA which had been uncovered. I gave an example of the kind of engineering weakness which had been found in the AGENA.

I stated my desire to introduce Aerospace Corporation as contractor for general systems engineering and technical direction. There ensued a brief discussion of the capabilities of Aerospace. As I remember it, at this time Mr. McCone agreed that this was probably the right thing to do. He reminded me that it had been at Dr. Charyk's insistence that Lockheed had been given systems engineering responsibility.

I went on to point out that to introduce Aerospace would require changes in contracts, because at the present time these provide for systems engineering by Lockheed and for technical direction by a Configuration Control Board. Mr. McCone agreed that the CCB was undesirable and speculated as to its origin. I said that I wanted General Greer to be fully in charge of the CORONA contracts, including ITEK as well as Lockheed, and that, e.g., I wanted him to be able to station representatives at the ITEK plant.

The immediately subsequent discussion covered much the same ground that previous discussions of this subject have. General Greer's qualifications were questioned. The historic role of CIA was recalled. The statement was made that I wanted only to cut the Agency entirely out of the satellite business. I tried to make

it clear that such contributions as are made by three or four administrative people in the Agency who presently have responsibilities in the CORONA project would be eliminated; that I felt that this was not equivalent to cutting the Agency out of the satellite business. During the discussion that followed Mr. McCone made a number of sharp criticisms of the ~~(S)~~ NRO and of my administration of it, which I urged him to put in a letter to me. He stated, among other things, that he thought it was "absolutely criminal" for me to make a visit to the West Coast and conduct an investigation of the conduct of the CORONA project without inviting anyone from the CIA to be present.

He asserted that his records show that during the past year every meeting between us had been at his invitation. He noted that the present meeting was also at his invitation, pointing out that it had resulted from my phone call to him mentioning that I must report to USIB a need to make changes in the CORONA contract, a need of which he had never been informed. I reminded him of a meeting in early February, arranged at my request, at which I reported in detail on the changes in the contract structure that I felt were necessary; I noted that I had a copy of his memorandum of record of that meeting. I stated that the only difference between what I was proposing now and what had been discussed in detail in February was that I was now determined to use Aerospace Corporation for systems engineering and technical direction whereas in February I had said only that this was under consideration.

There was extensive discussion of working relations between me and Dr. Wheelon. At the close of this discussion I stated as clearly as I could that if there was to be an Agency role in the satellite field under the ~~(S)~~ NRO, then these relations would have to change, since I could not be responsible for activities over which I had no control and about which I had no knowledge. Mr. McCone did not challenge this statement; it is my memory that he made a brief acquiescent acknowledgment.

At the close of the meeting, Mr. McCone agreed again that Aerospace could be installed as systems engineering contractor. He said he would "speak to his boys" about changing the contracts. I said that I wanted General Greer to establish the terms of the contracts. He suggested that I discuss with Dr. Wheelon what I wanted to do.

  
Brockway McMillan